Notes on *Star Trek*

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On Time Travel, the Subconscious Signature, and Market Capitalism

Time travel is a worthwhile diversion. I would argue it stimulates a specific part of the imagination that is tied into the subconscious signature of the human experience. The (re)memory core of the imagination is detached from consumerism. It proves capitalism is not our natural state of being. True ontological becoming, not to be confused with transcendent consciousness, is to envelope oneself into others. It is more than empathy, but an actual becoming of others where we ourselves and all our matter and make-up of our thoughts are replaced with the content of what we are naturally endowed to see into the other. Bias is not our true state. Bias, bigotry, division, racism, transphobia, ableism, these are all learned traits. They are not natural. To become any other individual, we must dispense with all ingrained fears and hesitations of what makes humans human.

This ontology is old wisdom that has in various matters been adapted into organized philosophies of religion with unsubdued calculation throughout our earthly history. What considerations of time travel offer us is an honest reflection of what it means to connect with others outside our time. If we can imagine that, it only proves that bias and transfixed market capitalism are not natural. Perhaps all humans have at some point considered some aspect of time travel. Perhaps that has always been the case. If that has always been the case, across different cultures, climates, and societal structures, once again we can prove that there is some part of the mind left untouched by the negative influences of this worldly existence. What this points to is that the concept of time travel activates an empathy that is child-like and pure, detached from latent cognition that devises timetables for our eminent completion of this course of life and takes us into other arenas of study. While, for me, the idea of a subconscious signature is an old one, it is difficult to communicate across barriers of thought processes, aesthetics, and culture. However, I think it can be understood through the light of how one opens oneself up to time travel narratives.

The Conflict and Promises of Revisiting the Past and Seeing into the Future

I want to return to a previous post, "On Time Travel, the Subconscious Signature, and Market Capitalism" and the ethics of interpreting oneself with the present moment, detached from the past and preserved for the future. In that post, I stated, "[w]hat considerations of time travel offer us is an honest reflection of what it means to connect with others outside our time. If we can imagine that, it only proves that bias and transfixed market capitalism are not natural" (2023). Visitations from the past can be destructive and it is that element of confrontation that can sow doubt within ourselves that will certainly lead to a destructive future. We must see past the fragments of (re)memory and capture the present moment as if each moment were a test of our collective ethics and moral standing. There are times when that may not seem to our advantage, but it will lead future steps when our courtesy to ourselves in being true and honest will manifest a future or promise and hope.

Science fiction offers examples of when time demonstrates the dominant potentiality of the present as opposed to alternative ontological curving into the sails of doubt and destruction. In the *Star Trek: Enterprise* episode, "Carpenter Street" (2003), the past is contained within a capitalist system. As Archer and T'Pol find themselves in Detroit in 2004, they must steal money from an ATM and steal a vehicle just to complete a mission that will ultimately save Earth. During their investigation to locate the Xindi they discover a man who works for a blood bank is abducting people for the Xindi for money. This is literal blood money. The meaning is not symbolic. It is not esoteric or drowning in cross-references so as to be abstractly resolved. It is clear, their past, our present, is the capitalist endeavor to do us harm. Archer and T'Pol capture Loomis and interrogate him to learn more about the Xindi threat.

LOOMIS: I told you, I work at the blood bank. He wanted someone from every blood type. Eight blood types, eight people. He figured I had access to that kind of information.
[…]
ARCHER: What's he paying you?
LOOMIS: Five thousand apiece, double for the last three.
T'POL: Is that what human life is worth in the twenty-first century?

T'Pol represents the enlightened future as it was the Vulcans who made first contact and radically changed life on Earth, pushing Earth towards a future paradise. Archer represents the future human self; determined, capable, and having the freedom and knowledge to be gifted with the opportunity to venture out to the stars. He represents trust as he is the central figure that will save Earth from the Xindi weapon. This coordination with trust and enlightenment against the backdrop of twenty-first century Earth shows its hand and the depth of resolve we require in the present to make the right decisions for ourselves, here and now, if we are to obtain a future of prosperity.

Babylon 5 also demonstrates that we are not who we seem to believe we were meant to be in alternative futures. In "Babylon Squared" (1994), the *Babylon 4* station that vanished without a trace before

Babylon 5 was built reappears. However, the crew left of *Babylon 4* are experiencing warped time episodes themselves. Cmdr. Sinclair sees a restructuring of time after boarding the station. He sees a battle on the station where Garibaldi sacrifices himself so that he can escape against his will.

Garibaldi (as envisioned by Sinclair in a vision of an alternate future timeline): “There’s no time. Get going. Jeff, I finally understand. This is the moment I was born for.”

Sinclair (returning to he present): “What was that?”

Major Krantz: “It’s different for everyone. A flash. Forward, backward. All of us, the entire station, we’ve become unstuck in time.”

Later in the series, in the episode, “War Without End, Part II” (1996), when Sinclair returns to enlist the help of Delenn and Sheridan to steal *Babylon 4* and take it back in time, he makes sure that Garibaldi does not know about the mission so that the future Sinclair had seen for him does not come to pass. We see Sinclair as currently knowledgeable about the time rifts and his ultimate connection to them, what he must do, and who he must become. In “Babylon Squared” none of this was clear.

Captain Burnham and Cmdr. Rayner visit a possible future where the Breen have destroyed the Federation in the *Star Trek: Discovery* episode, “Face the Strange” (2024), when a Krenim Time Bug cycles the ship through various time frames, but through a technological coincidence, they are aware and unaffected. Not being in our own time, with our collective selves, is destructive. Similarly, we see the intra-conflict between Burnham and a younger Burnham when the Captain revisits the one past tense in which she was still new the *Discovery.* This past Burnham believes the Captain Burnham is an intruder and could not possibly be her from the future. There is the hint that is it not time travel that is being rejected as a real possibility, but doubt in herself that she could ever become a captain. The past Burnham holds a phaser to Cmdr. Rayner and Stamets, who is able to be present outside of time due to the integrated tardigrade DNA. Rayner is against the clock trying to convince a women from the past who sees herself as a failure, not capable or deserving of being a leader, all while that future leader is on the bridge attempting to complete the mission and coordinating with them. The past here represents doubt and future represents destruction. However, both can be atoned for with a clear occupation of the present. It is that presence that allows Captain Burnham to get the past crew of *Discovery* to cooperate with her so that they can complete their mission.

When we revisit Admiral Adama’s past in the *Battlestar Galactica* episode, “Daybreak, Part I” (2009), we see him as a troubled man. He primary contention is whether or not to have his dignity strained by agreeing to take a lie detector test in order to get a higher paying office job, which would have taken him off a Battlestar. We see him drunk to the point of sickness as he lies in the street looking up towards to the stars desperate to come to the decision to either have his honor tested and measured, or remain in the fleet. Adama does sit down for the test, but in the process discovers he cannot allow his word to be tested or doubted. This is one example where past actions to honor himself and not complete the lie detector tests assures a helpful resolution to seeing that the remnant of humanity survives and makes it to Earth. Here, revisiting the past demonstrates the conflict we extracted ourselves from can lead to a better future, or present, depending on one’s perspective. In this case when Adama will not allow his word to be regarded have the potential of being a lie, as determined by these businessmen, we see the core standard of how be represents himself leading the fleet to a new home

and humanity safe from the Cylon threat. We witness the past, revisiting these decisions of who or what to honor and how that is character building for the what will come later. Adama demonstrates a personal ethic that is unshakable and unable to be bought. Capitalism loses out to personal dignity as demonstrated by a man who will lead his people home.

Captain Janeway must navigate the promise from the past that seeks to disrupt the future when *Voyager* comes under fire from a Klingon ship that was retired decades ago in the *Star Trek Voyager* episode, "Prophecy" (2001). When a ship of Klingons meets with *Voyager* and its captain, Kohlar, determines that B'Elanna Torres's unborn child is the savior of their sect, the *kuvah'magh*, that settles for Kohlar and the rest of the Klingons that the Federation and the Klingon empire are no longer at war. However, there is religious strife between those that doubt Kohlar's interpretation of the prophecies and those that are ready to believe. These Klingons have been traveling for four generations, seeking the *kuvah'mgh*, who they believe will show them the way to their new homeworld. What Captain Janeway and the crew learn is that they are all carriers of an illness. Despite all odds, the Doctor discovers that hybrid stem cells from the B'Ellana's child will cure all the Klingons, hence, becoming their savior and they settle on a new world. Here the transit of time, from the point at which these holy scrolls were written to the time their foreparents set out for the long journey, a time before the Federation and Klingon empire made peace, determined a climatic conflict for their journey that ultimately led to them being saved. The time taken to seek being united with their savior resulted in that very promise. This a positive example of where time meets the present and how the a call from the future can determine the present. The past visits the future and in the process, prophecy is made true.

Time is not a passive construct. It is an actionable element of our very being. We see ourselves in a different light when we revisit the past. Often we can become absorbed in the mistakes we made. However, if we remain vigilant in the present, we ward off the potential for acting out in ways that do not demonstrate our true character. This is easier said than done. The present can be overwhelming at times. We can fail to meet the demands of the test we find ourselves in. What it takes is a preparedness. We have to come to terms and accept the mistakes we make. That acceptance will make us stronger. That acceptance will make us less likely to fail future tests and are not unlike practice runs for the coming test that will result in a great consequence. If we find acceptance in looking back, and readiness in the moment, the future is far more likely to be that of a measured spirit of warmth; free from the binding elements of humanity's worst impulses, and no longer laboring for a peaceful respite. We will enter the present with its connected-ness to the future elements of our own well-being.

Expansion of Utopian Struggle in the Motif of Entering a Room/Space(s) for Continuity

To quote Kim Stanley Robinson "utopia has gone from being a somewhat minor literary problem to a necessary survival strategy" (as quoted in "Guns Under the Table: Kim Stanley Robinson and the Transition to Utopia," *Utopian Studies*, Oct. 2020, Andrew Miller, 389). To carry over this survival strategy for the sake of utopia from novelized fiction to *Star Trek*, allow me to examine two episodes from two different series, "The Ship" (1996) from *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and "Carpenter Street" (2003) from *Star Trek: Enterprise*. On the surface, these two episodes would not have the most immediate contact of comparison, but with some small amount of explication they are both striving for the same strategy as proclaimed by Robinson in defense of a utopian society.

Yes, I aware of the irony of quoting Robinson, who is considered a "hard science fiction" writer, while it is often those very same school of writers who are dismissive of *Star Trek* and related televised science fiction. However, I think I can make the argument that *Trek* lives up to Robinson's statements of what science fiction should do. For example, as a Marxist, Robinson did come to see the inclusion of revolution as necessary in his works. Did not *Star Trek* have the same literary tactic? It was only in the social revolution after WWIII that humankind came together, made first contact, and in less than a century eliminated poverty, bigotry, hunger, war, nationalism, and virtually most crime. Granted, Robinson sees revolution as a means to get there, not the natural consequence of the trauma of a devastating third world war only to be quickly followed by first contact with the Vulcans, which was certainly a strong motivator, but *this is not true of most species* (as the Vulcans will attest), and I would argue the sociological transformation can be counted as a revolution towards a post-scarcity Earth with the same intent.

What do *DS9*'s "The Ship" and *Enterprise*'s "Carpenter Street" have in common? It is obvious once it is discussed. On the surface both "crews" enter what form of heroic journey into another place – another birthing place from struggle – for Archer and T'Pol it is 2004 Detroit and for Sisko and his crew it is a crashed Dominion ship. Both had to go inside the enemy terrain in hopes of retaining and saving the utopia that Robinson spoke of. They were both strategic locations of conquest, a struggle any Marxist-inclined science fiction writer would have to give lenience to.

What is that threat to utopia that both episodes consider? In "The Ship" the enemy is the Dominion, who seek control of the Alpha Quadrant at any cost, and even attempt to invade the ship where they have taken refuge. For Archer and T'Pol in 2004 Detroit, they have entered a different kind of place outside of their normal experience. It is here they must confront and prevent the Xindi from creating and releasing a bioweapon in the past that will prevent the global maturity of humanity for the few that survive, and it should be noted only a few would survive thanks to Archer's intrusion, otherwise the Xindi soldiers would have left no survivors. However, not only does Archer save humanity and the past, but the Xindi bodies and technology he captures will go a long way to turning many of the other Xindi towards their side in changing their mind about releasing the weapon to destroy Earth in their present. Another struggle within a struggle, only this one has expanded outside of internal conflict of

humanity and into the intra-conflict of the galaxy. Similarly, the captured Dominion ship will be utilized in a later mission and work towards to overall goal of defeating the Dominion. Both victories lead to further victories.

Sisko and his surviving crew must save themselves from what could have easily been an onslaught from the Jem'Hadar. The Dominion soldiers only restrain their activities to prevent themselves from accidentally harming the Changeling hiding inside the ship. Sisko losses several of this crew in his work to keep the ship to take back to Starfleet headquarters as an intelligence gathering operation and he and the Vorta end their tête-à-tête with the Sisko regretful that the Changeling died, "I only wanted the ship." The Vorta responds, that she only wanted to save the Changeling. It was such a dishonor to let a Changeling die that all the Jem'Hadar involved in the operation take their own lives. A struggle… for them as well, to live up to their role as protectors of those whom they understood to be gods.

I would even argue that this reverse struggle for the Dominion and extended-beyond-Earth struggle for the Federation, highlights and only further proves Kim Stanley Robinson's comments above, and his invocation that struggle is needed to demonstrate the practicality of reprieve from political consequentialism. Very much in the science fiction motif, Archer and T'Pol entered 2004 Detroit while Sisko and his crew entered the downed Dominion ship as other internal places. Both were centerpieces for conflict, to be overcome for the sake of utopia to be won at any cost to give meaning to skirmishes; both rooms in which the continuity of the dream of an ethical framework might work towards the benefit of those participating in ramifications of the antecedent behavior of oppression versus utopia.

“Extreme Risk” and “Invasive Procedures” as Symbols of Capitalist Internalization

What we have learned living in the capitalist society is that those who suffer the most as a consequence of global capitalism are equally locked out of securing relief. I return to what I have previously discussed as the Theory of Monetized Empathy, which states that people are more likely to be oppressed by other people if they lack financial well-being. This is indeed cyclical, just as the polar opposite is true and equally cyclical for those who are wealthy. Their benefits from this form of a social construct are never ending.

What we see in *Star Trek: Voyager's* “Extreme Risk” (1998) is B’Elanna trapped in a cycle of depression, which manifest itself in a manner that she feels as though she feels nothing after learning about the loss of the Maquis to the Dominion and Cardassians. All that she knew, all that she fought for, all that she invested her craftsmanship into for the benefit of defending the colonies from the Cardassians was officially over; blocked off after first being separated from them when *Voyager* was lost in the Delta Quadrant. The doubling of loss is magnified into an emotional trauma that she cannot tolerate and, in the process, attempts to harm herself over and over.

Just as how B’Elanna must confront her own trauma of loss, so too, must those who are condemned and born into a class that is disadvantaged under the capitalist model attempt to coordinate a trauma of forfeiture of their own personality and personal, individualized freedoms. There is no freedom under the capitalist model, just as there is no security for B’Elanna to believe in. The model, I will put forward, that the fact being that *Voyager* is B’Elanna’s family is what I will call a model of the post-capitalist world. A post-scarcity world, where we can find security, permanence, family, and personhood; a wealth of emotions to know that we are indeed alive.

However, this attempt to evolve into a post-scarcity world cannot be forced on others. There must be a natural awakening. I personally believe the benefits of Degrowth can offer that spreading, internalized, multiplied realization for all people to see that wealth can come from personal fulfillment, and not a paycheck, or a yearly incremental raise. We only need to slowly, collectively form small groups and will influence and latch onto the larger surrounding model that I feel can counter consumerism, which is certainly a first line of defense among common, average individuals.

This dogfight to get to the beneficial recursive doorway and letting go of what makes us people first is what Verad attempted to do when he tried to steal the Dax symbiont in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*’s “Invasive Procedures” (1993). He sought to become a joined Trill because the Symbiosis Evaluation Board did not believe he qualified to be joined. Because he lacked what he believed was the house on the hill with the white picket fence and a nuclear family, he enlisted the help of a vulnerable, easily influenced person and hired guns to help him steal Dax, even though that would kill Jadzia. When a host is separated from their symbiont after the joining has taken place, they will die when the symbiont is removed. Verad clearly suffered from what Earnest Becker would call a denial of death. This self-

rejection led to him cheating to fulfill his own imagined heroic quest as a joined Trill, no matter the cost.

We do the same thing in our contemporary society. Every decision we make has an impact on others, often others who are in no place to mount a defense. We drive. We buy. We work. We deny our mortality. We contribute to the capitalist model not out of necessity, but by choice. Life is always a choice. There is nothing stopping us from collectively choosing to erase economic dependence as a means for quality of life. Through our choices we kill others, harm others, just by contributing the model that exists, we all kill Jadzia and we have the innate ability to realize this is what will happen as a consequence of our actions.

To escape this model where we are forced to attempt to harm ourselves just to see if we are still alive, trapped in an internalization of the social model we find ourselves in; to escape our willingness to steal that which gives life to one person just to do what we willingly believe will enhance ourselves on a comparatively superficial level, we must embrace a doctrine of putting the needs of others first, first and foremost. You will find that this *choice* will not only save lives but will increase the quality of our own lives if we all work together towards the same model of a newly created equality of fulfillment as a form of a social construct; one that gives life and does not take, that gives to each other and does not compete for resources, one that spreads access to basic needs through community, strength, and character of magnified excellence.

Nus Braka takes control of the media: An obvious parallel to the present – Paramount and the White House

Vernari Ral News Network

– Breaking News: The Federation is Compromised. Leaders and civilians alike are trying to flee Federation space, signaling Federation weakness

– Breaking News: The Federation is on Trial! Nus Braka hosts the trial of the century aboard the Athena, a gaudy treasure of the pompous Federation (with a ticker beneath it that reads) Tyrant-In-Chief Vance threatens military junta if Federation President Rillak fails to approve his naval aggression

-Breaking News: Federation oppression has been cut off from the rest of the quadrant as Venarai Ral heroes block Starfleet occupation (with ticker beneath that reads) […] joins Venari Ral free state as dozens of former Federation worlds rally around leadership of visionary Nus Braka

– Breaking News: Venari Ral leader Nus Barak hailed as "hero" as he holds the Federation on trial for crimes against the galaxy (with ticker beneath that reads) Terrorist or freedom fighter? Learn the true Nus Braka story – More at 2100

In the *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* season one finale, "Rubincon" (March 12, 2026) Nus Braka (Paul Giamatti) has contained all of Federation space with mines of a synthetic form of the Omega particle, which we previously saw in *Star Trek: Voyager*'s "The Omega Directive" (1998). What is clearly a tribute all the previous courtroom and/or trial *Star Trek* episodes that came before it, Nus Braka puts Captain Nahla Ake (Holly Hunter) on "trial" for what he views as the crimes of the Federation. The Vernari Ral televise the trial with very specific graphical overlays that has become the staple of modern new services, even with a ticker scrolling across the bottom, and in doing so, we see the tyrant has taken over the media, which refers to him as a freedom fighter and a "hero" (not his own words, apparently).

The question is this: Is this commentary on how Paramount (the parent of CBS) has bowed down for the Trump administration? Or is this gaslighting or catering to a fandom that would clearly not approve of Paramount's actions all the while still continuing to appease the government anyways?

First Paramount appeased Trump by settling a lawsuit and paying $16 million towards his presidential library over a *60 Minutes* episode. It was known the Paramount / Skydance deal needed to be approved. Just the kind of thing that Nus Braka would exploit. And now that Paramount Skydance is so close to taking over Warner Bros Discovery (the deal just needs to be approved), David Ellison, CEO of

Paramount, is the administration's golden hawk. This, to such an extent that sitting U.S. Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, was recently quoted as saying "the sooner David Ellison takes over CNN […] the better" so that news organizations would not report the truth over the Trump administration's bombing of Iran, and instead only air propaganda.

I don't know if Paramount is gaslighting us. What we do get is a great *Star Trek* two-part episode that is meaningful and comments on issues of the day. However, if all this was to conceal the rotten interior of Paramount Skydance, they have taken something sacred and are further using it to exploit the tendencies of the audience, which in itself, is also taking control of the media.

The importance of a singular leader

This is not a popular opinion, but I have come to believe that social movements do not ultimately bring systematic change. Not be a contrarian, but I think it takes the right individual that sparks the final measure that brings about real, fundamental change. Let me give some examples.

Martin Luther King, Jr. I know he didn't do it on his own, but he was a singular force, and that is authentic.

From fiction:

Gabriel Bell from the famous Star Trek: DS9 two-parter, "Past Tense" and the Bell Riots. Yes, he also very much did not do it on his own, but he was a force to be reckoned with.

John Sheridan from Babylon 5. He also did not do it on his own, he had both an immediate crew and an extended crew, but he was hands on and even died only to come back and finish the job. He ultimately made the decisions that changed history.

I know how generic I sound. I know I seem like I lack faith in the collective. I do lack faith in people at large. I know what you are willing to do to me when no one else is watching. I know it takes a single soul, the right person who possesses the qualities that the collective claims to be in favor of, but they are never actually capable of those moral values, not personally, they are not. It will take one leader to bring change. The group cannot do it.

Not all the time, but a lot of the time, if you start talking about something often enough other people will start talking about and next thing you know large masses of people are talking about it, but even then that doesn't mean that fundamental change will occur. It takes more.

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Trauma and Postmodern Subtext in Star Trek

B'Elanna Torres, martyrologies, the resolve of violence superstructures to persist as their own solutions – just as the competing martyrologies-imposed doctrines of violence, so, too, did Lt. Torres imposed violence upon herself in "Extreme Risk" as the solution to coming to terms with the holodeck grotesque imagery she created upon learning of the fate of her friends. The factors are meta as just as she imposes violence on herself the televised performative imagery dictate to our subconscious what the measure of violence is acceptable, thereby making violence acceptable as a healing tool, rather than the intended purpose to seeing the recreation of violence as a symptom of trauma.

In "Necessary Evil" (1993) we are permitted a view into Kira's life with the Bajoran Underground. After being suspected of murder by Odo, we see – temporarily – a Kira who has sabotaged ore processing on *Terok Nor* so that the Bajoran miners might have a couple of weeks off from their labors. Though the poignant detail is that through Odo's revisitation of those events, he understands that it was Kira after all that was guilty of the murder of a Bajoran collaborator. Dominick LaCapra is cited in *Trauma, Postmodernism and the Aftermath of World War II* by P. Crosthwaite that "writing trauma is a metaphor" as its representation cannot capture the essence of the experience. The trauma of the occupation is re-written, re-visualized as memory in "Necessary Evil" though without the heightened nuances that comes from that suffering. Instead, we see a testimony of the realities of the occupation, as told through Odo's narration and (re)memory.

However, as Rudolf Freidburg describes in *Contemporary Trauma Narratives: Liminality and Ethics of Form*, "testimony can never cope with the limit-case traumas it describes, which will reveal the nature of a 'negative sublime,' a dark emblem of existential 'otherness'" (2014, 76). Kira's self-testimony both at the mark of the episode in which she hides her mission and instead presents herself as a saboteur as well as at the end of the episode when she confesses to the killing mark the occasion of her own testimony, that, through the eyes of Odo and for the viewer, fail to capture the reality of the trauma of living under the occupation.

Deep Space Nine was a re-visioning of *Star Trek* of the 1990s. The entire premise is the rising out and above from the trauma of the Cardassian occupation. Leigh Gilmore is quoted in Freiburg's *Contemporary Trauma Narratives: Liminality and the Ethics of Form* that the memoir boom of the 1990s reflected not the economic boom that coincided with it, but "trauma's centrality to contemporary self-representation," further adding that,

> Telling the story of one's life suggests a conversion of trauma's morbid contents into speech, and thereby, the prospect of working through trauma's hold on the subject. Yet, autobiography's impediments to such working through consist of its almost legalistic definition of truth-telling, its anxiety about invention, and its preference for the literal and verifiable, even in the presence of some ambivalence about those criteria. Conventions about truth-telling, salutary as they are, can be inimical to the ways in which some writers bring trauma stories into language. The portals are too narrow, and the demands too restrictive. Moreover, the judgments such accounts invite may be too similar to forms in which trauma was experienced. When the contest is waged over who can tell the truth, the risk of being accused of lying (or malingering, or inflating, or whining) threatens the writer

> into continued silence. In this scenario, the autobiographical project may swerve from the form of autobiography even as it embraces the project of self-representation. These departures offer an opportunity to calibrate our attention to the range of demands made by autobiography and the silencing or shaming effects they impose. (2001, 128)

The 1990s, an era of ineffectual trauma writing, were a prelude to the alarming increase in young people taking their own lives in the 2000s and 2010s. From the *New York Times* article, "Why are Young Americans Killings Themselves," we read

> After declining for nearly two decades, the suicide rate among Americans ages 10 to 24 jumped 56 percent between 2007 and 2017, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And for the first time the gender gap in suicide has narrowed: Though the numbers of suicides are greater in males, the rates of suicide for female youths increased by 12.7 percent each year, compared with 7.1 percent for male youths. (Jan 6, 2020)

It can be argued the reassessed ineffectiveness of trauma testimony through narrative and visual art precede these tragedies out of the absence of justice. Many studies in conflict resolution and peace studies have shown that those who have experienced mass trauma are more able to recover – are only able to heal – when there is an adamant and clear offering of mutual recognition of what has been lost. The other side must acknowledge what they have done to those who have experienced oppression. Likewise, this is not only true for large groups, but also on an individual level with those incidents of trauma at the hands of closed societies or interdependent families. This can be seen with the suicide of Vedek Yassim in "Behind the Lines," struggling against the tide with her last words "Evil must be opposed" (1997). Vedek Yassim understands that the narrative of oppression has lost its meaning without rightful recognition; the valuation of the memory has been disenchanted and with that the cycle of suffering begins anew.

Freiburg cites Gilmore in "Historical Trauma and Its Narrative Representation,"

> Something of a consensus has already developed that takes trauma as the unrepresentable to assert that trauma is beyond language in some crucial way, that language fails in the face of trauma, and that trauma mocks language and confronts it with its insufficiency. Yet, at the same time, language about trauma is theorized as an impossibility, language is pressed forward as that which can heal the survivor of trauma. (2014, 77)

This dead language of trauma is reflected how Odo might have never vocalized or linguistically confronted Kira upon coming to understand that she killed the collaborator, Vaatrik. For Kira, all these years it was left unspoken, so as not to mock Kira's own trauma of the action of her duty with insufficient words. Odo clearly does not see Kira as a murderer or, through association, he also clearly does not see the Bajoran resistance as terrorism. Otherwise, Odo would be the first person to disrupt the agency of the plot and would have informed Gul Dukat that Kira was a member of the Underground. In an instant, Odo sympathizes with the Underground's motives despite not fully realizing the gravity of their full interactions on the space station.

Professor John Bolt writes for *Action Institute*, with the article, “Terrorists or freedom fighters: What’s the difference?,” that the metaphysical difference between freedom fighters and terrorists in terms of a justified greed verses an unjustified envy, stating,

> The issue at hand is not whether fighters for a noble cause often act in reprehensible, cruel, and destructive ways. Such actions, however, have as their goal acquiring or reacquiring something valuable, something highly desired. This may be land, sovereignty, or political goals such as liberty or economic equality. Freedom fighters usually come from oppressed or marginalized groups that have been deprived of something important, such as a homeland, and their struggle is to obtain it or gain it back.

The Atlantic’s Conor Friedersdorf cites Glenn Greenwald with the article, “Is One Man’s Terrorist Another Man’s Freedom Fighter?” that the politicalization of the term terrorists is itself subject to manipulation and doctored indiscretions, writing,

> The application of the term “Terrorist” by the U.S. Government has nothing to do with how that term is commonly understood, but is instead exploited solely as a means to punish those who defy U.S. dictates and reward those who advance American interests and those of its allies (especially Israel). Thus, this Terror group is complying with U.S. demands, has been previously trained by the U.S. itself, and is perpetrating its violence on behalf of a key American client state and against a key American enemy, and — presto — it is no longer a “foreign Terrorist organization.”

I do not easily repost a summary that equates the fight for liberty with greed. Such a summation neglects the suffering of the marginalized group. However, I understand Professor Bolt’s exacting words to be comparisons to crossing a moral boundary. Kira and the underground were without doubt not only guilty of manipulating lines of moral boundaries, but Kira repeatedly remarked herself how she suffered from a form of guilt as the consequence, just as a religious person would suffer guilt for seemingly abstaining from a perceived virtue. There is an indicated relationship.

When Jadzia Dax was reunited with Curzon Dax’s Klingon counterparts who took a blood oath to attest vengeance against a child murderer, Jadzia asked Kira how she dealt with killing someone. Kira responded, “Your questions about my experience with killing. If you’re wondering what it’s like. When you take someone’s life, you lose a part of your own as well” (“Blood Oath” 1994). Kira faces the double-trauma of not only living under the occupation, but living with her response to the occupation in the actions she and others took in their demand for liberty. The constant witnessing to the occupation through (re)memory and recalled dictation and (re)articulation in the new life on *Deep Space Nine* occurs as a subordinate frequency of failed remunerations on the side of the Cardassians who are constantly reluctant to return stolen artifacts or admit – testify – to atrocities. Therefore, the recital of memory does not fully stand in with the acquisition of a healing tide of fortune, but instead forces these relived memories inward.

Where does moral authority rest with Bajoran terrorism? It is the insertion of the ineffectual 1990s distilling ingrained trauma according to the best efforts of social memory, however slighted or withdrawn? Or, does it capture a cultural prophecy that denotes the measure of capital acquaintance with what will come after this short-lived age? What of what is to come? In “Duet” (1993) we see the future of trauma. The trauma of the bystanding participant, leading to suicidal impulses with immediate

gravity. Aamin Marritza's eventual assertion that he is Gul Darhe'el, responsible for the war crimes at Gallitep labor camp, highlight the passing indifference of the average soldier as well as the indwelling truthfulness of measure of morality, whether directly responsible or by association.

Writer and dissident, Václav Havel, once stated that participation in a totalitarian system by way of allowing it, of not fighting against it, was of equal responsibility as being an orchestrator of it, to paraphrase. We are the architects of oppression when we are silent and demure of our social responsibility. The guilt of the realization drove Aamin Marritza to reframe his own identity so that he would represent the justice of punishment, not just for himself, but according to his people's crimes. This: is the delayed generation of guilt that seeks to end their own life; the newborn resentfulness of a world that displays madness as a collar medallion. What is more, we have a generation that so assumes to be a guilty partly that they are without the associated representation that Aamin Marritza symbolized. That is the oppressive state: it instills guilt as a measure of control and violation of norms to assure its own power and now it is our younger generation that cannot find a way to be a justified freedom fighter, but instead, forces a guilt upon themselves as though they were participants in a war of reprisal.

Kira, having experiences direct oppression, knew how to negotiate to mortal territory of guilt over justification. Our younger generation now, from the 2000s to the 2010s, are forced to be witnesses of a crude post-totalitarian capitalist superstructure that does not prepare them for the currents of inequality, but instead enforces an image of self-blame as bystanders of helpless oppression.

Note: A Truism from Trek about Theology

This just a short note based on my own experiences and my strong interest in *Star Trek*. There is a line of dialogue that a brilliant writer, Robert Hewitt Wolfe, probably didn't know he was getting correct. In the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* season one episode, "In the Hands of the Prophets" (1993). Vedek Winn is talking about when Kai Opaka had told her that the reason a non-Bajoran was anointed the Emissary was because one should never look into the eyes of one's own Gods. Despite how villainous Winn is, she still concedes that Opaka was correct.

I come across many examples of what meeting God is like in pop culture and almost 100% of those are not intentionally attempting to make such a statement. This particular statement attributed to Kai Opaka is indeed correct. I support it completely. Meeting God is very difficult. Please do not mistake my discussing God as having to be the Abrahamic God. What I can say is if you really put your entire being into being granted an audience with God, you will eventually get it if you are willing to go far enough. For me, it took a great deal of effort and practice to get there. My suffering to get there was significant.

It was not pleasant. God saw right through me. I hesitate to use the word "test" but for the first several years I found myself locked in a series of tests that I mostly failed, despite my best intentions. But even then I did not meet God. I am not sure what caused God to finally personally confront me, but God is light (and pure honesty) and light casts itself directly through you leaving nothing out. It was hard to deal with. It was extraordinary and terrifying. As Kai Opaka said, one should never look into the eyes of one's own God. I would not recommend being so ambitious. Though, that being said, having put so much effort into finding God, I do think God watched my back on more than one occasion as life went on. For that I am grateful.

Being older now, there is more of an ongoing casual discussion with God. As of late that has been more distant. My lack of effort has put God at a distance, though there is clearly something She wants me to know. What is interesting is that despite God showing me all my faults, for years and years and years, She now tries to encourage me and tells me I have everything I need to find a way to cope and survive. Such pleasant and well-toned advice after such a dramatic building up point.

So, do I recommend looking for God? Of course, that is a decision only an individual can make. I would only beg you to try to be more prepared than I was. As the saying goes, hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

From Morality-Tale Science Fiction to Fantasy-Infused Settler Colonialism

In the *Star Trek: Enterprise* episode, "Strange New World," (2001) T'Pol attempts to caution Captain Archer and his crew about visiting the uninhabited planet they discover. She wants to take a number of days, just over a week, to complete scans from orbit and with probes. The lone Vulcan on the ship, T'Pol, will later see her warning was justified when several of the landing party is severely disoriented by a type of pollen that is swept in from the mountains when a storm blows through their camp. They become delusional and are so intoxicated by the pollen there is even the risk of death. T'Pol's warning can be seen on a larger scale: no matter how tempting let other planets, let space, be its own thing, for it may be prepared to try to kill you even when habitability appears the most likely outcome out of all possible outcomes.

That is what author Isobel Cockerell cites from Kim Stanley Robinson in her article, "Silicon Valley's sci-fi dreams of colonizing Mars," in which she re-empathizes, "Why, they say, can't we let Mars be Mars? A place that has been unravaged by human exploitation. A place where the rocks, the ice, the sky, have their own value." Cockerell interviewed Robinson who states that his work is that of science fiction and what is being practiced, what is planned on being practiced, lies more in the realm of fantasy.

Cockerell's article strongly condemns Elon Musk's blind ambition to colonize Mars, the Starlink network of satellites, which I have written here are projected to count as high as 100,000 in the coming 10 years. Cockerell's July 2024 *.code* article, may have sparked the context for *The Conversation*'s August 2024 article written by Vivan Lam, "Astronomers have warned against colonial practices in the space industry – a philosopher of science explains how the industry couple explore other planets without exploiting them." In other words, to take T'Pol's measured and cautious approach.

Lam starts her article by most interestingly pointing to a white paper, "Ethical Exploration of the Role of Planetary Protection in Disrupting Colonial Practices" compiled by those from NASA, JPL-CalTech, Blue Space Marble, Johns Hopkins, The JustSpace Alliance, Howard University, and others. The paper serves as a type of amendment to the Outer Space Treaty, which to note, is unenforceable, as of now. The paper is only 6 ½ pages long and well worth your time; to briefly quote, "Enabling those with the wealth to privately engage in space exploration efforts could exacerbate already existing wealth inequality in the immediate future" (6). Lan continues with space ethicists's concerns of polluting space, and by extension, certainly, planets, and possible microbial life. Lam also raises concerns about labor practices in a post-colonized world. Yes, there are those inventing the technology to do these things, and are handsomely rewarded, but what of those who will be housed on this planet, serving as laborers, and, as we have seen in the science fiction series *For All Mankind*, may very well become second class citizens.

Patrick Stewart* once spoke at a conference in which he was asked questions by the audience. He was asked about his feelings about the current state of space exploration. To paraphrase from memory, he said that is asked this question often and that he tries to stay away from it, but his general feeling is that if we cannot take care of our fellow humans here on Earth, if we cannot take care of planet Earth, perhaps we have no business out on other planets.

“Spock’s Brain” and the Perpetuation of Sexist Control

Regular readers will have noted that though *Star Trek* is discussed often in this space, not once have I discussed *The Original Series*. I rarely watch it. There are a handful of good science fiction episodes, but most of the series lacks everything that equates to quality and more than a few are prime examples of being subject to its time, perpetuating stereotypes and dogmatic, oppressive ideas. One such episode is “Spock’s Brain.” I am aware it is a fan favorite due to the novelty of Spock continuing to function, his mind and body, after his brain has been removed. I understand. Viewers are having fun with it. A closer look at “Spock’s Brain” will show that the episode seeks to perpetuate sexist and controlling ideas about women and suppress women’s freedom.

Please allow me to borrow the phrasing from this article, “Climate Change Isn’t Sexist, but The Way We Talk About It Is,” and put forward that *science fiction isn’t sexist, but the way it is sometimes presented is.* This post will allow a very easy understanding of how “Spock’s Brain” not only reinforces traditional dangerous sexist ideas, but seeks to push back against the women’s movement of the 1950s and 1960s as well. In all, the messaging of the episode is that women’s independence is a threat to men and should be countered through any means of control.

Sigma Draconis VI was a planet that had once been highly advanced, but fell into an extended ice age. As a result when Kirk and the landing team beam down they find men behaving in an archetypal, primitive manner. These men could barely speak coherently. They did not have more advanced tribal clothing making techniques. They only understood that they must attack the landing party. They are the essence of barbarians. This planet has a separation between men and women. The women leave literal man traps in cave walls, with food and weapons, hoping to capture men to enslave them. This is what *Star Trek* of the 1960s is reflecting as a threat from women who are empowered. The danger that these men fall into to if they are trapped is they will have a belt placed around their waist that will cause immobilizing pain if they do not behave according to the women’s will. The women, of course, have complete control over them. The women live underground where it is warm and they have a futuristic environment full of the comforts of a more advanced civilization. Neither the men or the women have a concept of mating, it is shown, and we will come back to this later.

When Kirk and the landing party try to talk to Kara, the leader among the women on the planet, she is presented as the *other* women, too feeble to carry on a conversation. They try to convince her to give Spock’s brain back and she is shown to not have the capacity to understand what even a small child would understand. Here the men on the surface are demonstrated as mentally weak due to women controlling the planet and the women are shown to be mentally weak to reinforce ideas about women who have too much freedom. Why do I put this forward. Observe Kara’s behavior over the course of

their conversation. She cannot control herself. She demonstrated all the listed "symptoms" of the once common diagnosis of Hysteria. Please see my article, "Hysteria in the Late Nineteenth-Century," for a detailed analysis. Hysteria was a diagnosis given to white, middle and upper class women through the most unscientific means that were only men's attempt to enforce their own power of influence and control to make women feeble and subjected.

The often repeated line from Kara, showing her as out of control and not able to understand her surroundings, "Brain, brain! What is brain?" is a clear example that women left in positions of equality will lose their grip on sanity. From my linked article above,

> Hysteria was more than just a simple disease, Laura Briggs writes. It was "the way nineteenth-century U.S. and European cultures made sense of women's changing roles" such as "their increasing participation in a (rapidly changing) public sphere, paid employment, and declining fertility" (246). It is interesting to emphasize that Briggs, like other scholars, represents hysteria as a condition imposed on white women. There were racial elements to this diagnosis. Briggs also points out that it was a condition that middle class white women were subject to as lower class white women and women of color were understood to not be subject to the consequences of "overcivilization" (Briggs 246). However, Augustine and the other women profiled in Asti Hustvedt's book, *Medical Muses: Hysteria in Ninteenth-Century Paris*, were poor, lower class women and girls (Hustvedt 4). The three women profiled in this book "lived at a time when women were exclusively defined through their relations with men. Fatherless, unmarried, and poor, these three women found themselves in a world that had little use for them" (Hustvedt 4). One has to make the conclusion that hysteria was forced upon women of all classes, as "overcivilization" for middle class women and by association an extension of that subversive criminality for lower class women.

Spock, who has taken the role of the "Controller" in this episode that will see to the protection and livelihood of the women underground is completely fine, even when his brain having been removed from his body. If that terminology is not enough, the women, or the Eymorgs (the brute men on the surface were named Morgs), were call "the Others." At the time, *Other* was a term already being used among philosophers and critical thinkers and writers, but had not made its way into the vernacular as it has today. However, today, an objective mind can clearly see what is being said.

To say that the women who lived in comfort had childlike minds would not be fair. They were less mentally capable than a child. They were othered. Meanwhile, the men were forced to live on the freezing surface in the most primitive conditions were portrayed as victims. The messaging taking place is clearly a push-back against the greater liberties women have gained in the 1950s and 1960s, being far more common in the workforce and gaining greater autonomy than in generations prior. The growing feminist movement of the 1960s may have been a prime target of the threat of empowered women depicted in this episode all while stripping women of their agency.

I am aware it would be argued by some that the ending of this episode which sees Spock's brain returned to him and the end of the Controller (and female superiority) might be seen as victory for parity. Kirk attempts to explain to Kara that life will be different. What Kirk believes he is doing is bringing women and men on the planet together again so that they can be mates (I told you I would come back to this) and presumably restores an equality of the sexes. However, it can also be argued that

Kirk is again playing the role of the arbiter of gender. Consider Charlotte Perkins Gilman's often read and studied short story "The Yellow Wallpaper." Paula Treichler, in her essay, "Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in 'The Yellow Wallpaper,'" (1984, *Tulsa Studies of Women's Literatur*e) states that the yellow wallpaper "is a metaphor for women's discourse" (62). On the surface women's expressiveness reveals systems of contradictions but once liberated "it expresses what is elsewhere kept hidden and embodies patterns that the patriarchal order ignores, suppresses, fears as grotesque, or fails to perceive at all" (Treichler 62). In being deprived from her creative expression the narrator projects the contradictions of her diagnosis and prescribed therapy onto the patterns and design – the makeup – of the wallpaper. In questioning the integrity of the design of the wallpaper she is calling into question the validity of her husband's diagnosis and prescribed cure. What Captain Kirk has just done on this planet is to enable men to again prescribe cures for women who seek creativity and freedom. Kirk is in fact the man replacing the Controller and enforcing a "cure" that will dominate women on this planet for generations to come.

Star Trek is a Collaborator with Contemporary Injustice

Star Trek is a dangerous, denialist lie that is about hope in the future. We cannot hope for a future without injustice where Earth is a paradise without first addressing injustice here and now. Then we can talk about utopia. I realize not all science fiction does what *Trek* does. I also realize *Star Trek* does not exclude contemporary issues, but it does so with a backbone that Earth is a utopia and it is the other that we find morality tales of conflict. This leads to just one conclusion. *Star Trek* is a collaborator.

In the *Deep Space Nine* episode, "The Maquis, Part II" (1994), Sisko states, "The trouble is Earth. On Earth there is no poverty, no crime, no war. You look out the window of Starfleet Headquarters and you see paradise. Well it's easy to be a saint in paradise." Paradise. This is the A story in every *Trek* episode and series to the B story of conflict and problematic justifications in all other homeworlds for all other species. Paradise is the backbone and it is us! We are portrayed as being capable of utopia. The best that *Trek* could do was invent a WWIII, Eugenics War, and global catastrophe that lead up to First Contact when we suddenly started behaving. We did not do so internally. It took First Contact to get us there.

Babylon 5 does not portray a paradise. *Battlestar Galactica* certainly does not. While they acknowledge and give hope to a possible future grace, it is only established through considerable cost in lives and wars that shook entire civilizations. Utopia cannot be a given. We cannot assume that the premise of social-ecological-economic salvation comes from a strong place in which we already find our mutual community. As Cmdr. Kelly Grayson explains in *The Orville* season three finale, "Future Unknown," (2022), first humanity must learn to come together and realize that we each stronger when we take care of each other and work towards our own common good above all else. It is only then that the exceptional technology that improves life for everyone can be invented because, as a course of nature, we have become responsible enough to know how to use it.

Star Trek creates a minor backstory that states we became responsible only after global destruction followed by First Contact. We had no choice. In *The Orville,* we made the choice. We, too, must make a choice. With that in mind, *Star Trek* cannot be healthy as a morality clock. It cannot set a good example. To rephrase Audre Lorde, the master's tools cannot build a freedom house. As such *Star Trek* collaborates with capitalistic, dogmatic, stoic determinism that influences bootstrap ethics and far-reaching morbid desires that we will get to where we need to be through will alone. Such massive movements are never done alone. We are lost without each other. Without mutual sacrifice and an everlasting communal agreement to let conflict pass away, we are not responsible enough for utopia and all the light that it would bring.

The Orville's "Mad Idolatry" and Star Trek: Voyager's "Sacred Ground" as a Lesson in Explanatory Ethics

In *The Orville*'s "Mad Idolatry" (2017) Kelly Grayson violates initial contact protocol with a lesser developed species to assist a girl who had hurt herself. Kelly heals the girl and before she becomes aware of the seriousness of the situation, villagers arrive behind her and witness the act. In time, Kelly becomes worshiped as a deity and for hundreds of years she is considered the savior of their world. Much like how Christianity developed in the Middles Ages, great horror is committed in her name. Murder, torture, condemnation, judgment, all traced back to the idea that Kelly will save those who are innocent and judge those who are not, with the condemnation of death. "If you are innocent, Kelly will heal your wounds," the dominant religious authorities say as they cut those subject to condemnation in such a way that they will bleed out until death.

There is a parallel worth considering on an ethical domination persuasion that tatters reality. In *Star Trek: Voyager*'s "Sacred Ground," (1996) Kes encounters a what is considered a holy protection from what that alien species believes is subject to the spirits and she is almost killed. She is literally zapped from something more than a force field, something more than protection, and she falls into something more than a coma. Captain Janeway convinces the order of that religion to allow her to go through a ritual in the hope of saving Kes and convincing the spirits of that alien species to heal Kes and allow Janeway the blessing of their ways.

Just as Janeway must convince the spirits of that world that she is worthy of the blessing to heal Kes, Cmdr. Grayson works to convince the population of that world that she is not a deity. They both work to change and shift the patterned ontology of those world's religious stance. Janeway, because at first, she does not believe the spirits are real, but that the ritual is just a test to convince the locals and learn, scientifically, what will cure Kes from her ailment, and Grayson because she must indeed prove that world's practiced tests are false in an attempt to speak to officials. The key difference is that Janeway comes to question her disbelief, she comes to see that science is not holistically complete and perhaps not the only answer to resolving life's problems, life's core circumstance in a universe that must always have clear answers where questions are mystic. Grayson also changes, somewhat, or at least we can say it is likely. Once the population evolves to the point of leaving their religion behind and developing space travel, they seek to meet her and comfort her that their history of religious barbarism was not her fault, "our planet worshiped you as a deity for many centuries, but had it not been you the myth would have found another face. That is the truth of growing that all worlds must go through, it is a natural stage, and it eventually brought us here. So you must also believe in the higher self, just as we now do," to paraphrase somewhat.

I had stated these are lessons in explanatory ethics. This is true. Janeway learns a lesson outside of science, which was indeed her religion. She comes to gain insight into spiritual matters. She thought

she only had to complete a test, to prove herself, but it was the spiritual reality that was proved and placed her in an ontological stance that removed certainty and practical explanations. Likewise, despite Cmdr. Grayson's self-loathing and self-blame for a religion of butchery that revolved around her, she finally meets that evolved species that does not blame her at all, but seeks to explain, to comfort her, to let her know that the planet thrived in spite of their own dark history. She is not to blame. She is encouraged to see beyond the simple growth practices and believe the possibilities of social evolution, and to take comfort in that. That comfort is certainly a spiritual revelation, an eclipse towards more practiced reality and sees beyond the ramifications of history and into the practiced reality of the here and now. Just as Janeway gains spiritual insight into the here and now, Grayson recovers from her self-blame and narrow pursuit of her vision of history. "None of this matters," Janeway is told. And she comes to see why. The real test, for both Janeway and Grayson, is an explanatory ethos into the ultimate belief in self.

Gaius Baltar Escaping Freedom on Tau Cygna V

> JANEWAY: Your new world is a prison. You are under his control.
> DA VINCI: When are we not in prison? Hmm? When are our lives free from the influence of those who have more power than us? If this New World is a cage, then it is a cage of gold, of marvels, of opportunities. If this Prince is violent, violence can be tempered.
>
> ("Concerning Flight," 1997)

The familiar reader will recognize that I have taken great liberty with Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*. It is my hope that by the end of this post you will see the experiment I have attempted to complete.

In the *Battlestar Galactica* episode, "Take a Break from All Your Worries," (2007) after failed attempts to get Gaius Baltar to confess to crimes against humanity, Adama introduces the idea of injecting Baltar with an experimental drug intended to induce severe anxiety to the point of delusions in order to get him to talk. It is agreed and what we see is a Balter, almost, but not quite drowning, which is a fitting reflection of his own continuous anxieties, which start near the beginning of the series when he begins seeing Caprica Six but does not know if she is divine or a delusion. It is commented more than once that Baltar's primary focus is on his determination to save himself. This is a continuing theme of his character until towards the nearing of the end of their journey. While so many of the crew, not all, but many, digest their circumstances with composure, Baltar is in a readily consistent fit of neurosis. We also learn during Baltar's formative years, he grew up poor, on a farm, but even went so far as to change his dialect to achieve greater success on Caprica. As Fromm writes,

> Every neurosis is an example of […] dynamic adaption; it is essentially an adaption to such external conditions (particularly this during early childhood) as are in themselves irrational and, generally speaking, unfavorable to the growth and development of the child. Similarly, such socio-psychological phenomena as are comparable to neurotic phenomena […], like the presence of strong destructive or sadistic impulses in social groups, offer an example of dynamic adaptions to social conditions that are irrational and harmful to the development of men. (1994 reprint, 14)

Baltar's close drowning under the hallucinogenic effects of the military drug mirror his own continuous fear of becoming subdued by his constant surroundings, his actions taken to survive, his dormant frustration with his escape from his youth on Aerilon, and even his forced signature, forced by the Cylons, on the death warrant of so many innocent fellow humans. Consider his demonstrated frustration with his father. Consider when Caprica was being bombed by the Cylons and all he could think about was if he were to be found as inadvertently, but guilty all the same, of being complicit.

Consider his delusion that he died and woke in a resurrection ship, showing himself, however briefly, that he, too, was a Cylon.

Baltar's deluded righteousness for survival is not unlike the transformed warrior from Ikarra VII in *Babylon 5*'s "Infection." He, too, sought out his own determined cause, that was completely off course from reality. Sinclair essentially encouraged a sort of talk therapy to get who was formerly Nelson Drake, now an advanced walking weapon programmed to eliminate anyone who was not a pure Ikarran. This neurosis of seeking control where it could not be justly found was manifested into the creature that Drake became. This was all in search of a foremost freedom, freedom that could never be gained because it was not determined within true circumstances to begin with, but within a war.

Freedom can lead to a misdiagnosis of reality. When Data confronts the human settlers on Tau Cygna V in "Ensigns of Command" (1989) that they must evacuate or be destroyed by the Sheliak, they do not believe him. They take comfort in their freedoms, their freedom of adaption to the harsh environment, their freedom of accomplishment of having created an aqueduct in the desert, they consider their freedom of thought to be a complete weapon to be used against the Sheliak, despite Data's warning to the contrary. As Fromm states, "[f]reedom is […] an ambiguous gift" (32). Humans begin their lives helpless and dependent. Helpless, much like the early settlers on Tau Cygna V. Humans go "through all the dangers and fears [the] lack of instinctive equipment implies. Yes, this very helplessness of [humankind] is the basis from which human development springs; [humankind's] biological weakness is a condition of human culture" (32). The settlers in the desert of Tau Cygna V lauded their own achievements and believed they had escaped weakness itself. They mistook independence for strength, and freedom for indestructibility.

Fromm deconstructs this malleability of human freedom, writing, "the structure of modern society affects [humans] to two ways simultaneously, [they become] more independent, self-reliant, and critical, and [they become] more isolated, alone, and afraid" (104). Perhaps the Valakians from *Star Trek: Enterprise*'s "Dear Doctor" (2002) represent this stage very well. Independent on their own planet but succumbed to an isolation of what they know to be a great independence that could save their species out among the stars, if only they had warp technology to get there in a meaningful way. Again, freedom is a trap, much like a telepathic pitcher plant. Just like with the settlers on Tau Cygna V that Data could not convince to see reason, "[b]ecause in the fight for freedom in modern history the attention was focused upon combating old forms of authority and restraint, it was natural that one should feel that the more these traditional restraints were eliminated, the more freedom one had gained. We fail to recognize, however, that although [humanity had] rid [themselves] from old enemies of freedom, new enemies of a different nature have arisen" (104-105). For the settlers, it was the Sheliak. For the Valakians, it was the illness that spread through their population.

What is the opposite of this imprisonment of freedom? It turns out it is the very freedom of imprisonment itself. Consider when Delenn and Lennier lock themselves in with the ailing and dying Markab in *Babylon 5*'s "Confessions and Lamentations," (1995) only to subject themselves to possibly catching the illness, only to subject themselves to witnessing death. The two have expressed a high order of freedom, by rejecting it altogether. By being willing to potentially sacrifice themselves in order to bring comfort to the dying. This in polar opposition to Baltar's typical mainstay of self-preservation:

> Selfishness is not identical with self-love but with its very opposite. Selfishness is one kind of greediness. Like all greediness, it contains an insatiability, as a consequence of which there is never real satisfaction. Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction. Close observation shows that while the selfish person is always anxiously concerned with himself, he is never satisfied, is always restless, always driven by the fear of not getting enough, of missing something, of being deprived of something. (Fromm 115)

In the episode, "Take a Break from All Your Worries," (2007) we indeed see Baltar's literal bottomless pit, his pleas of innocence, his worried insistence that he is not culpable in the destruction of humanity. He only finds freedom in denial and overt concern in which he strains his logic to fit his premise.

This straining of logic almost works with Worf's intent to have Riker assist him in performing the *hegh'bat* ritual in the episode "Ethics," (1992) so that he may die after an accident leaves him paralyzed. Is Worf abiding by Klingon tradition, or is he finding escapism through those customs despite having lived most of his life around humans and having full knowledge of human customs and adaptations to an impairment as well? Worf knows that his son would rather have his father in his life, in any capacity, but Worf has lived so committed to Klingon ideas, it may be difficult to see past the cultural mores.

> If we differentiate the two concepts of normal and neurotic, we come to the following conclusion: the person who is normal in terms of being well adapted is often less healthy than the neurotic person in terms of human values. Often he is well adapted only at the expense of having given up his self in order to become more or less the person he believes is is expected to be. All genuine individuality and spontaneity may have been lost. (Fromm 138)

Without the successful procedure, Worf would have only lived to normalize himself – to be what he was expected to be and live a disabled life. As Picard points out to Riker, a human could do it, but it was unfair to expect the same detachment from individuality from a Klingon just to normalize to human standards. A part of him would be lost, just as he only lived because he was expected to. Worf would in essence have to perform the role of a magician. Just as Worf's life would have been performative, so, too, can we compare the expectations of the Valakians. They also sought a magician, or what Erich Fromm calls a "magic helper" that only leads to a falsity of existence.

> If the magic helper is personified in an actual person, the disappointment that follows when he falls short of what one is expecting from the person – and since the expectation is an illusory one, any actual person is inevitably disappointing – in addition to the resentment resulting from one's own enslavement to that person, leads to continuous conflicts, which is usually followed by the choice of another object who is expected to fulfill all hopes connected with the magic helper. (Fromm 175)

When Archer decides against giving the Valakians a cure, so that Starfleet does not put itself in a position to play God amongst other species, their first thought is to request warp technology so that they might find another who could create a cure to save their species. In essence, another magic helper. This is one instance in which science wins. Their illness is not viral, but genetic as its clear evolution is favoring the other species on the Valakian homeworld, the Menk. If it were not for Phlox's observations

of the rapid evolution of the Menk, Archer would have likely provided a cure. Starfleet would have played God. The ramifications of that can only be imagined. The result, with Phlox being honest with Archer about finding a cure, was spontaneity for the Menk. “Why is spontaneous activity the answer to the problem of freedom?” Fromm asks,

> We have said that negative freedom by itself makes the individual an isolated being, whose relationship with the world is distant and distrustful and whose self is weak and constantly threatened. Spontaneous activity is the one way in which [humans] can overcome the terror of aloneness without sacrificing the integrity of [themselves]; for in the spontaneous realization of the self [humanity] unites […] anew with the world […]. (259)

Worf being cured of his disability could be said to have been a matter of spontaneity, given it was never attempted on a living being, and seemingly, only would have been successful on a Klingon. It was the living grip of spontaneity that changed the settlers’s minds on Tau Cygna V. It was certainly spontaneity which saved Baltar’s life on the baseship when President Roslin had an experience during the jump that caused her to change her mind about letting him bleed out and die. It was a matter of spontaneity in which Sinclair trapped himself in with the Ikarran and convinced him to look inward to see the truth of what happened to his people, deescalating the scenario. Spontaneity is a gift that allows freedom to withstand itself.

Complaint Memo: Star Trek and Climate Change – Ways to Improve

These are just a few short notes that I already made elsewhere. Given time I will elaborate on them more completely, perhaps even individually, but I thought I should post this **memo** *here as well.*

In the *Star Trek* universe we learn in the *Voyager* episode, “Future’s End” (part 1), that most of Los Angeles goes underwater. If I remember correctly, it is because of an earthquake.

How did LA go underwater, but not San Francisco? San Francisco is where Starfleet Headquarters is, and San Francisco is fine.

Why doesn’t newer *Trek* incorporate what we now know about sea level rise? It is mentioned that future generations have to clean up our climate mess, but sea levels wouldn’t correct themselves.

I can’t recall what *Star Trek* episode(s) mentioned that future generations have to clean up our climate related issues. What is mostly focused on is the aftermath of WWIII.

I do know when it is mentioned, quite specifically, in *The Orville*, several times. I am certain *Trek* references it, too, but they really do need a course correction on attempting to reflect an accurate projection of the future, as best as they can.

Take sea level rise for instance. I am aware too much about climate change is not known with the kind of specifics to include into dialogue, but with sea level rise we know a great deal and with a lot of specifics. There is no reason *Star Trek* should ignore it as the U.S. is largely ignoring it now.

I wrote a post about how *Star Trek* would benefit from focusing more on ecology

I have a great many opinions on how *Trek* should be more realistic with the evolution of living language, linguistics, and portrayal and evolution of language, but I have never written about it. I should and will eventually.

But what is beyond essential is the need for *Trek* to get involved in incorporating the realities of climate change into historical canon.

Star Trek, Ecology, and Green SciFi

Imagine a *Star Trek* future where the Xindi-Avian species did not become extinct. The Xindi still went on to become Starfleet allies thanks to Captain Archer, and as seen in the future through crewman Daniels; a future where some Avians – presumably with other Xindi – migrated to Earth, flying above San Francisco liberated in the paradise that Earth becomes. What of that paradise? What of the ecology in that paradise? Next to nothing has been established regarding Earth's ecology in the 24th century. We know, vaguely, that Earth is a paradise.

As Captain Sisko states in "The Marquise, Part II" (1994), "On Earth, there is no poverty, no crime, no war. You look out the window of Starfleet Headquarters and you see paradise. Well, it's easy to be a saint in paradise." What do we know about how this paradise has been maintained. We know there are many professions in this era that are dedicated to the smallest detail of ecological order. Keiko O'Brien was a botanist, but what is more she was so skilled at her craft that she, and others like her, were able to move on from Earth botany and on to other worlds, Bajor in her case. This future universe opens professions not just in exobiology, but even comparative exo-botany or, along the same course, comparative exobiology, etc, not to mention astromycology.

Even non-canon resources have little to add to a discussion of ecology. Yes, there have been environmentally minded episodes, certainly *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* comes to mind, but this certainly doesn't come close to envisioning a future relationship on Earth between our species and the natural world. To credit, we are given the knowledge that humpback whales become extinct by human hands and through Spock's ability to calculate time travel, they are brought back from extinction.

There is reason to believe the dangers of our current age, mass extinction, global warming, climate change in general, were not too far off from how canon describes Earth's 20th and 21st centuries. Does the newer intonations of *Star Trek* have a responsibility to create or worldbuild what the future might be like, coming from where we are now? Yes, they do. It is understandable to proclaim that there were environmental losses from the Eugenics Wars, but we there is great room to dedicate to the nuances and details of how humanity fostered a paradise from such a dismal place. We have already been robbed of human to alien relationships, speaking specifically that only two alien languages have been developed (Klingon, most notably, and now Romulan). There should be more created languages with attention to how linguistic change evolves over time.

Star Trek, I feel, has a duty to get more specific with the nature of the future of the Earth and its inhabitants, human and non-human animals alike. Are there zoos in the 24th century? Where does Starfleet stand on the Prime Directive of non-humanoid life on planets that are considered for colonization? We know from "Home Soil" (1988) that terraforming is forbidden on planets with any form of life and that this is strictly enforced. By all accounts this respect for the natural order does not resonate as clearly under the guidelines of colonization.

I argue there is demand for elaboration of the ecological world in the *Star Trek* universe. There have been many comments, collectively, over the concept of solar panels on the Golden Gate Bridge as

shown in *Star Trek Discovery's* "Such Sweet Sorrow, Part II" (2019) as well as *Star Trek: Picard's* "Remembrance" (2020). This shows how excited the viewing public would be for *Star Trek* to examine future energy practices, which directly relates to future conservation practices. This returns to asking the question: What is the ecology of the 24th century? What alien species have been rehomed, introduced, invaded? What Earth species were lost in the 6th mass extinction? To further the point, one of the most talked about details online during the week after "Nepenthe" (2020) was the beautiful natural domain and the poor alien bunnycorn.

Like *Star Trek* has created the Klingon and Romulan languages, *Star Trek* should invest in an ecology of the future. Green politics in art is not new. It started properly in the 1970s in poetry and literature, much earlier if you count the transcendentalists as an origination point or even the green terrains of the Romantic poets. An examination of the ecology of the future also helps build on what *Star Trek: Discovery* has invested so heavily on: getting the future generation excited about science. Yes, *The Next Generation* did this as well, but *Discovery* has been more direct about it. *Star Trek* ecology is gifted to us in small details at a time, but there is room to invest more closely in such an important factor that contributes to our well-being and how we envision the natural world also succeeding with the science fiction premonition of human flourishing.

The Ethics of Waiting: Babylon 5's "Mind War" and Star Trek: Voyager's "The Gift"

The *Star Trek: Voyager* episode, "The Gift," (1997) was clearly largely influenced from the *Babylon 5* episode, "Mind War" (1994). In both episodes there is a.) the build-up/evolution of psychic abilities, b.) the damage to the ship/station through those abilities, and c.) a parting gift. The formula is too exact to be an accident. Aside from the science fiction historical explication, what we can also take away from these two episodes is the moral formula of waiting.

Jason Ironheart waits to see Talia Winters, knowing she will be asked about him when the Psi Corps arrives on *Babylon 5*. He delays seeing his former partner for her own safety, and for his. Indeed, the Psi Corps do question Ms. Winters and scan her intrusively to make sure she is telling the truth. Here, the ethics of waiting have proven those with ill intent are impatient. This waiting is also the reason Ironheart came to *Babylon 5*, so that he could allow his transformation, his individualized evolution to progress. He needed to stay out of the hands of the Psi Corps as he understood what he had become was too dangerous for them to have access to. Likewise, Kes waits as long as she can before determining what she seemingly already knew was a very real possibility, that she must leave *Voyager.* She had time to allow others to say their last words and allow others to be in the right place at the right time to assist her in leaving to save the ship, such as when Tuvok uses a mind meld to give her the strength to hold on just a little longer.

With each, Kes and Ironheart, they are losing control of their enhanced psychic abilities. They are becoming something else. Something else they have waited for. A resolution to a long wait that culminates in an exhaustively thorough new becoming, a new being. With this new becoming they are both transformed beyond what humans might expect to see for themselves as ever being able to evolve towards. However, in line with the plot of *Babylon 5*, Ironheart does say at his leaving that he will see them again in a million years. I briefly mention the million years tie-in for *Babylon 5* in my post, Attraction to Light: Light as Communication of Imagined Evolution.

Then there is the parting gift. Having achieved a higher level of sentience, a gift seems like a staple of traditional mythical ethos. Kes becomes a being of light that vanishes, but first propels *Voyager* light years closer to home and safely out of Borg space. Ironheart's parting gift is personalized. He gives Talia the ability of telekinesis. This is all very fitting with the respected stories. Kes was a member of the crew. The entire ship was her family, and it could be argued that they had awaited the gift that life brings from good deeds. In this case that good deed was to save Kes in the pilot episode and save her entire people at the risk of leaving *Voyager* lost in the Delta Quadrant. If waiting is related to good deeds, both have intertwined to reward *Voyager.* Ironheart's gift to Talia was personalized, as he had known only her, intimately, previously in their lives.

Ironheart was also rewarded through his efforts to keep the secrets of his evolution out of the Psi Corps' hands. However, even though Talia receives the gift of telekinesis, it is not simple. As we later learn,

the corruption of the Psi Corps ran so deep that even Talia herself was an unknowing, unwilling double agent. In that episode, “Divided Loyalties,” (1995) we learn that Talia had been compromised by a sleeper program and that, further, if Sheridan and Garibaldi had not waited just a little longer, they would have brought Talia into the fold and she, the programmed Psi Corps extremist agent, would have learned everything they were doing. It was a close call, but patience and the ethics of waiting proved to be a resourceful tool to avoid becoming compromised themselves. I have long believed that when we are tested in life, it is how we respond to the situation, how we cope with the situation, that will best define our character, and it is through waiting to react, respond, or be impulsive that will yield the largest reward and the best measure for recovery.

Attraction to Light: Light as Communication and Imagined Evolution

In the *Babylon 5* season 4 episode, “The Deconstruction of Falling Stars,” (1997) we are given a possible image that takes place a million years into the future where humans have evolved into beings of light. They have not forgotten the trials of the Babylon 5 station or its crew. This light is a regular theme that might be worth noting in a summary conclusion towards evolutionary and ontological realization. The removal of self, emptying the space of one’s entirety to make room for another is essentially about light; creating light in oneself.

In the *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* episode, “Momento Mori,” (2022) we are shown that the Gorn represent the opposite of light, but as everyone who has seen *Star Trek: The Original Series* knows, even this darkness is temporary. Captain Pike has the most compelling line, “When we seek out the unknown, we will find things that challenge us. Frighten us. But we do not back down. We do not give in to fear.” The episode highlights it is light that saves the crew from darkness when they jettison the atmosphere processor to create the illusion that *Enterprise* has been destroyed, which creates a large explosion of light. With that sight the Gorn leave. However, in a very interesting twist we learn in the last episode of season two, “Hegemony,” (2023) that Scotty theorizes that the Gorn are biologically attracted to the explosions of light such as the coronal mass ejections (CMEs) from the sun in Shangdi system. Sam Kirk agrees that some animals evolved with such instinctual attractions to light. This does, in the end, go hand in hand to the eventual resolution with the Gorn as seen in the *TOS* episode, “Arena” (1967). Light enters and captures darkness.

While we on are this topic of light entering as a entry point to unlocking truth, please recall the *Strange New Worlds* episode, “Children of the Comet” (2022). The egg only opens with music and upon opening gives off a great light that then drops the force field and allows the landing party to transport back to the ship. It is also the harmony woven into this music that Uhura later analyzes and discovers the “comet,” M’hanit, provides a detailed signature or outline showing what will happen to it, foretelling the rest of what we see in the episode. Music that gives light provides a form of celestial prophecy.

The question is: Are we at a pivotal point in our development? Is there more than one possible future that we might be heading towards? Do we have the character to recognize the moment and move towards the light? These are topics that should be more at the center of normal day to day conversations. If we hope to achieve the type of societal stabilization that greatly increase our chance to make it to deep space, the conversation needs to change.

Solarpunk and the Vestiges of the Ascetic

About a month ago I had an idea for a book on a subject in which my knowledge is too limited to fill an entire book. The premise is that Transcendence, or experiencing transcendent consciousness, is overrated. It is directly related to the ancient conceptualization of the Righteous Nation* (See 2nd update below). A more detailed clarification of that statement is beyond the scope of this post.

I wanted to argue that a heightened state of awareness is the wrong experience to have move forward with contributing to improving societies and creating a better future. The vestiges of the ascetic should never be encouraged when instead we could be working on *education reform*.

The format for societal change is not to further attempts to refine archaic ideas of what a nation-state should do or be, as we continue to do today, but to **change the conversation**, in both the ontological and practical sense.

This is very much in the same, now-becoming, tradition of solarpunk science fiction. It still has a long way to go, but if the current waves of enthusiasm continue, it could very well get there. This summary comparison only makes sense of course if humans decide to prioritize the science of climate change. At this point, it seems unlikely.

Still, if one were to map a way forward, solarpunk has an incredible amount of potential. Some philosophers, such as Richard Rorty, believe fiction can do more to change society than any art found in philosophy or idealism in its most vacant sense. If this is true, and it makes sense on many levels, as early African American literature and testimonials so practiced, solarpunk can offer its own testimonial of potentiality. It is worth more than a subgenre. Publishers (sigh) should hold themselves responsible not just to preserving the past, but the future as well.

When the Sky is Beautiful Again, Always

I want to return to my post, "Solarpunk and Vestiges of the Ascetic." My primary point, which I believe I failed to communicate is the suffering required to attain the transcendent moment, to meet that clarity, is flawed. What I intended to say is that we should not suffer for a moment of enlightenment. To only experience but a moment of enlightenment is incorrect, and inhumane. It requires the neglect of self and horrible suffering that, is, which I stated, the vestiges of the ascetic.

There is no need to stand, starving, in anguish, on a pillar for days on end until one sees with the clarity of the motion of the universe. If we are able to recreate our bonded society with a greatly reformed educational system – a new holistic internalized syllabus – we would indeed find that we could live within enlightenment without suffering. It would simply be,….the way we live,….the way we experience every moment that passes,….and within that experience of life the sky would always be beautiful again.

Consider the *Star Trek: Enterprise* episode, "The Andorian Incident." When T'Pol, Archer, and Trip first arrive they do not suspect what is happening in the monastery, the place of contemplation that has been rerouted as an enforced networked spy location. Think of that: the place to find one's self has been turned to infiltrated the defenses of others. It is an ontological contradiction. Is this workaround towards the neglect of truth not exactly the perverted prism of reality we find ourselves in?

Now: Once Archer and Trip realize what is happening, that the Vulcans are captives, they are then in the moment of awakening. They have *attained* awareness. They are *one* with the sea of gratefulness and a life of ethics has paid off. That ethics comes from being raised on an Earth without poverty, money, want, hunger, or war. Here they have arrived. They are *within* the moment of realization. The confrontation is *irreconcilable*. They are magnets to emotive action. This is proven in how the conflict is resolved. They expose the lie, the spy, the deception, and they become one with those who had taken them hostage. The aid those that took them captive.

It is this consistency of character, in helping Shran and the Andorians with their mission, that Starfleet demonstrates not a moment of enlightenment, no, but a regularity of living in the movements of enlightenment. We should never be forced to suffer for a moment of clarity. Clarity should be consistent and forever present with humanity living within that orbit. We are not close to that. Most people who have retained with it means to be neighbors within a shared community – what we learn as children, but so often forget – will see that a consistency of character *is* enlightenment,..where the sky is beautiful, always.

Note: Righteous Nation Ideology in Science Fiction and Climate Justice Today

John F. Sitton's criticism in "Hannah Arendt's Argument for Council Democracy" (*Polity,* 1987 – link) and Odd Arne Westad's outline of the Korea's Neo-Confucian 'Righteous Nation' ideology (*Empire and Righteous Nation,* 2021) perfectly shows what we know about the intended goals of the Abrahamic god, and the limitations of that god's promises. This is essentially a conclusion that comes from interdisciplinary studies and is worth exploring further.

What *Star Trek* and *The Orville* accomplish is a realization of worldly righteous nation ideology. There is an Earthly utopia that must contend with interstellar conflict and contention. However, there is the clear hope and motivation in both programs to move the interstellar community towards the ardent utopia that they have realized. Still, the same motif that has existed for millennia on Earth, going back before the recorded writings of the Hebrew Bible (and existing within other ancient cultures) that we are, as a species, intended to move towards a sense of a holistic righteous nation.

That motif continues today. It is unintentionally what climate activists hold up as a standard in which to measure and contrast where we are compared to where we should be going. Humanity would be better served by letting go of this narrative and quite simply, trying something new. That is what *Babylon 5* and the 2003 reboot of *Battlestar Galactica* get right. Humanity has not reached anything resembling perfection. We continue to struggle with vice and contentious demeanor. We are still human. The future cannot hope to persist without realistic dwelling on our innate nature and preparing for that in the most adroit possible manner.

The Ethical Prism of Sentience in Season Two of Star Trek: Discovery

Sentience is a primary theme throughout season two of *Star Trek: Discovery.* There is the elemental nature of the crew of *Discovery* attempting to understand the red signs, or bursts, and Saru finally seeing that the Red Angel is a humanoid. At last they know for certain there is **meaning and design** behind the signs that the Red Angel has left to be seen. It is only later that they learn who the Red Angel is: Michael Burnham. The also learn that the Red Angel is Michael's biological mother, Gabrielle Burnham. I will not spoil the complexity of this fact for those who have not seen *Discovery.* However, I will completely recommend the entire series.

The process of ascribing **sentience and meaning** to the red bursts was a drawn out and complicated endeavor. While Starfleet commands Section 31 to project a newly formed feckless and dangerous nature to Spock, the crew of *Discovery* learns that Spock holds a prophetic warrant over the continuous time traveling nature of the Red Angel. It is a slow progression to seeing the Red Angel as having good intent. This abscission of mischievousness of the Red Angel is directly related to understanding the sentience of the Red Angel. It is only through ethically good bounds of upheaval that the crew discovers Michael's direct connection. What does that say about ethical conquest related for the viewer for *Star Trek: Discovery*?

There is a great deal to be said. As with the positive ethical projection that is being laid out for the viewer of the story, there is equally the ethically misguided nature of Section 31 that only grows until it is signified with Control. Control is (or becomes) a semi-sentient AI that is sophisticated enough to command possession of a humanoid body and to set its mission to possess the Sphere Data that is within *Discovery*'s main computer, but it still needs the Sphere Data to attain complete sentience. What Spock knows and is later able to share is that once Control does attain complete sentience, it will target and destroy biological life across the galaxy.

What we have is an ethical parallel of equals in season two of *Star Trek: Discovery.* The suspensive quarreling between good and evil could not be more clear. The biological and environmental **destruction and meaning** related here in season two is not unlike the DMA and Unknown Species 10-C in *Star Trek: Discovery* season four. Perhaps revisiting the plaintive adjunctive of morose reality verses the fusion of a direct approach of good contemplating evil is timeless and *Star Trek* either recovers that tradition or moves along in spite of its overuse, but the result is the same: we are moved to contemplate how evil within our own society in the here and now might be able to be banished through **community and direct action**.

This is a fictional model of ethical specifications where good wins out. However, interestingly, where we can see the most adroit relations is the identification of evil and how that mirrors what we know about day-to-day life, political upheavals, societal mores, and ontological disasters. What season two, as well as season four, show us is that there is a sentient existence behind both good and evil. Perhaps we can learn from this and understand the motivations of evil are not unlike the motivations for good. What is most fundamental about overcoming evil is understanding it. That is true for those who wish to

compel good to take its place as the centerpiece of organized society just as it is true for those lost in evil designs who wish to know a better way to live; as I suspect, they do.

Without Capitalism Rain Robinson Would Still Be An Astronomer

> Lysella: So Wait. If nobody has to have a job then why do you guys all work?
>
> Cmdr. Kelly Grayson: The right work can be satisfying for other reasons besides compensation. It's funny. With all the technology and all the different alien cultures this is still the part that newcomers always have the hardest time adapting to.
>
> Lysella: I mean it is all just so basic. You have a job, you survive. You don't, you starve.
>
> Cmdr. Kelly Grayson: It used to be that way on Earth, too. Until the invention of the matter synthesizer. It was the single most transformative moment in our history. When all your material needs are provided for at no cost it changes the entire game.
>
> Lysella: So then why don't you guys just lay around all that day and do nothing?
>
> Cmdr. Kelly Grayson: Well, it's sort of frowned upon socially, but more important than that, it's no fun. See on your planet, currency is money. In the Union, it's reputation, so if you do something, anything that benefits society, you're rich. And that can be anything from being a great scientist or a great doctor, a great chef, or a great waiter. **It's all value.**
>
> Lysella: That's amazing.
>
> Cmdr. Kelly Grayson: Or maybe you want to study a field of research; learn all you can about history, physics, literature, or art, just for your own pleasure. That's a respected life, too. The only life that is considered poor is the one that's wasted on apathy.

- From "Future Unknown" (2022), Season 3, episode 10 of *The Orville: New Horizons*

In "Future's End" (1996) after the crew of *Voyager* finds themselves stuck back in time in the 1990s, Tom Paris asks his new local friend, Rain Robinson, why she became an astronomer. "My brother had a telescope," she says, "a little refractor. You could barely see in the tree house next door actually, but it was enough. It was enough to see the rings of Saturn. I remember. I remember I used to think they looked like jewels from a pirate's treasure. All I ever wanted since then was to reach up and touch them." Rain Robinson worked for SETI at Griffith Observatory and is the first one to detect *Voyager* in orbit. She sends a standard greeting message intended for extraterrestrial life, but at that point does not expect how she will be caught up in the adventure with Tom Paris and Tuvok (and later, The Doctor) as they attempt to contend with Henry Starling. It is a two-part *Star Trek: Voyager* episode worth watching as it may help one to think differently about the computer revolution of the 20th century.

It is interesting to a see post-scarcity citizen, Tom Paris, interacting with a Rain Robinson, who is still firmly entrenched in capitalist survivalism. Yes, I do realize that to use an astronomer to make this point would appear to be biased towards those who are already privileged. However, is not that not the point? In a post-scarcity, post-capitalist world everyone would be free to explore the career of their

choice, be it an astronomer like Rain Robinson, or as Cmdr. Kelly Grayson discusses from “Future Unknown” (2022) stated above, one could do anything at all as long as they are contributing to society. I have long argued that without a currency economy people would still work because they would want to give back and contribute to a society that saw that all their needs were taken care of. Popular, oppressive, opinion would have the public at large believe that without currency no one would work. I do not believe that would be the case.

Consider the ethical leadership of T’Pol in *Star Trek: Enterprise*. When Captain Archer plans to steal a warp coil and strand another ship, the Illyrians, from getting home in “Damage” (2004), T’Pol breaks through her Vulcan emotional blocks that have been trodden down by her addition to trellium d, and states, “I can’t justify this course of action.” Archer replies, “We don’t have a choice” to which T’Pol aggressively slams and breaks a PADD on his desk and proclaims, “I won’t let you do it!” Here we can see even with T’Pol’s weakened state enduring withdrawal and addiction, she remains a steadfast ethical leader. Did a currency economy train her to maintain such a formidable ethical framework from which she drew out her grounded stance on right and wrong? No.

Without currency people will still know the difference between right and wrong. I go into how vital a greatly reformed education system is required for societal growth in my other two websites, Space Ethics and First Contact Ethics as well as at Towards Post-Violence Societies, and if you are so moved, you may read and understand my position that a reformed education system can offer unlimited potential for societal growth. As Kelly Grayson puts it, capitalism become irrelevant in *The Orville* universe after matter synthesis only because society was ready to share the technology for the benefit of all. They did not attempt to exploit the technology for financial gain. That is what led to a utopia in which everyone could follow their dreams and contribute to society in whatever manner they wished. What matters is that it is demonstrated, we see, that people still wanted to contribute to society.

We all learn these lessons as children. I do believe it is not just Western thinking in which children and youth are able to view the world in terms of an ethical framework under which they understand their place in the world as one in which they are mandated to respect others’s place and value in the world. My primary theory is that what happens is that the trauma of growing up in a hyper-aggressive capitalist world diminishes that understanding in our young people to such an extent that by adulthood the memories and ontological placement on oneself within that understanding evaporates. So few of us have hope and grace that survives within capitalism.

I do write about Captain Archer’s atypical behavior in another post on this site, “Narrative Obtrusion and Difference in the Deep Space Nine episode ‘In the Pale Moonlight’ and Enterprise’s ‘Damage’.” Yes, we do see an instance where post-scarcity citizens are behaving unethically, but even then it is measured. Though Archer steals the warp coil, they leave behind supplies, food, and plan to have a ship meet them for assistance once their current mission at hand – to save Earth – has been addressed. Though it is not discussed again we can safely assume that an assisting ship was sent to help the Illyrians. However, that is not the point I want to focus on. What we see in the episode is T’Pol signature ethical impulses that signifies everything that Starfleet itself signifies and will come to represent after the establishment of the Federation. What is perhaps a masterwork in the *Star Trek* universe is that there can still be an organizing, governing body that is ethical and motivated by good intentions. I am aware of the common criticism that compares the Federation with colonial

infrastructure and I am not rejecting that criticism, as it does prove to be true on number of occasions as I have pointed out on this website, such as in my post, "Eddington is Right When He States that Utopia Requires Assimilation."

There are valid arguments to be made that any governing body over a utopia is just as susceptible to a colonial persuasion as a capitalist society. That is what is lovely about debate. This is a universal discussion that we can have now being viewers of this utopian society and that in a rather meta analysis, we see those very citizens of that utopian society having among themselves as well. It is not just Eddington. In the *Enterprise* episode, "Demons" (2005), Gannet, an old friend of Travis Mayweather, told him that he should not join Starfleet because it represented the "last vestige of colonial impulse" demonstrating that they were thinking in those terms early in the canonical universe of space exploration and the living in a utopia. What is most interesting is that even though Gannet had this cautionary opinion, she still joined Starfleet Intelligence operations. Someone expressing those ideas was still able to contribute to the very body that represented what she was hesitant about. Is that not an ethical societal framework?

Why could we not establish a post-currency, reputation-based economy now, before our own ability to discover the scientific advancements of the *Star Trek* universe or *The Orville* universe? What they both made clear throughout both series is that society must be ready for advancement first before advancement comes. As the title of this post claims, without capitalism Rain Robinson would still be just as valued an astronomer as she is in a capitalist society. I would even go further that without capitalism society could heal from the trauma that a currency-mandated economy has imposed on the population. And there is trauma. This history of this trauma is beyond the scope of this post, but it is a reality of our world. It will take generations for collective society to overcome this trauma. It will take generations for a holistic, reformed education system to lead citizens towards a new world that would endow the opportunity that advancements could bring; be it space exploration or just exploration of our own humanity. It is all value.

Father Figures in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine and Babylon 5 and the Knowing of Our Shared Responsibilities

Avery Brooks said on a number of occasions that he accepted the role of Benjamin Sisko in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* because of the depiction of the ever-present father figure that Sisko represented in the series. Benjamin's relationship with Jake, his son, was repeatedly emphasized as the most important thing to Sisko. In many ways Worf, and his absence in his son's life, and Miles O'Brien, being a relatively new father who would rather spend time with Dr. Bashir than his family, play something like foils to Sisko. I say that because Sisko is not only a permanent and present father in his son's life, but he is lifted to the height of a father to Bajor as the Emissary. When Sisko is challenged by Akorem Laan, who briefly claims to be the the true Emissary, Benjamin stands down and accepts that he is no longer a father to Bajor, instead, leaving Bajor for Bajorans just as many wanted. During this time, in the episode, "Accession," (1996) Kira Nerys tells Sisko that he did not realize that Bajorans would have done anything for him, anything that he asked. We later learn this is true when Sisko is overcome by visions and tells Bajor not to join the Federation just yet ("Rapture" 1996).

Sisko was indeed a father to Bajor. In the same manner Captain John Sheridan in *Babylon 5* plays several different larger-than-life father figures. Though not having children of his own during the time that we see him (he later has a son), he is first a father to the station, Babylon 5, until he then becomes The One. The One is a title he shares with Delenn and Jeffrey Sinclair. Each of the three, each being The One ("War Without End" parts I and II, 1996) consent to their role in history. The One, the trilogy of One, become parents to time and space, to place and the ramifications of the war that will save sentient life and the younger species. When Sheridan returns form Z'ha'dum, having been resurrected ("The Summoning" 1996), he becomes a father to the non-aligned worlds and even some of The First Ones, species that have lived and evolved far longer than the average, younger species. Captain John Sheridan's father status in the Shadow War is repeated in the war to liberate Earth and then is finally cemented when he is made President of the Interstellar Alliance ("Rising Star" 1997).

The cosmic father figures of Sisko, who gives his life for Bajor, and Sheridan, who gives his life at Z'ha'dum, are not simple archetypes. While it is true that human history is littered with far too many father figures while women are dismissed and dispelled, I do argue that these two men represent what can best be achieved by taking responsibility and ownership of the situation presented to them. This is something we all learn as children, but so many of us forget in the fog of growing up and becoming young adults. That does not mean that it is not real. It is real citizenship. It is real equality. It is something we are all able to understand at one point, and if we are able to understand our responsibilities as citizens in a shared environment at such a young age, what is our excuse?

Just as we need these prominent, ever-present father figures, women teaching each new generation is not left out. We could not come to understand out mutual responsibilities in a shared environment without women leading the way, as they continuously do. Adulthood forgets who makes the contributions and even what the contribution is, thereby erasing women's role in advancing what good

may survive the chaos of the next generation. Parental figures place us in a climate of knowing. It might not be our biological parents, but someone, somewhere, is teaching skills that will either help the child grow to thrive, or simply survive the elements of destruction our society will burden them with. We can only hope that one day we will stop burdening our youth; stop forgetting who is contributing to raising children; stop preventing all of us from thriving. I believe those very roadblocks are why need to see father figures like Benjamin Sisko and John Sheridan be dramatized in the first place. We need to be reminded that the fight is real, but there are some called to calm the waters. Perhaps one day the waters will be calm on their own, uninterrupted by the preventive hand of hatred and the obstacles of fervent inequality.

Eddington is Right When He States that Utopia Requires Assimilation

Michael Eddington is either loved or hated. Many (perhaps most) feel his betrayal of Starfleet as an agent for the Maquis was an emotive betrayal corresponding to matters deeply entrenched in the outlaying ethics of Starfleet ideas, goals, and the fight against oppression in the larger galactic equation. However, Eddington was not wrong when he tells Benjamin Sisko that the reason he is being hunted down is not because of his ideas, but because he left the Federation.

> "*Why is the Federation so obsessed with the Maquis? We've never harmed you. And yet we're constantly arrested and charged with terrorism. Starships chase us through the Badlands and our supporters are harassed and ridiculed. Why? Because we've left the Federation, and that's the one thing you can't accept. Nobody leaves paradise. Everyone should want to be in the Federation. Hell, you even want the Cardassians to join. You're only sending them replicators because one day they can take their 'rightful place' on the Federation Council. You know, in some ways, you're even worse than the Borg. At least they tell you about their plans for assimilation. You're more insidious. You assimilate people and they don't even know it.*" ("For the Cause" 1996)

Eddington is correct that his perceived dishonor is mostly cast upon him because he left "paradise." What does it mean to leave behind a futuristic utopia? Certainly, we cannot say that it means one is unable to comprehend or carry out the orders of Starfleet under such guiding principles. Chakotay is proof of that. He left Starfleet to fight for the Maquis and due to the unexpected events that led *Voyager* into the Delta quadrant he became the First Officer, a Starfleet Commander, helping – successfully – to get the crew of *Voyager* back home. So, no, the argument that Eddington is a traitor, unable to appreciate the values of the Federation, is false.

What both Chakotay and Eddington prove is that the Federation is a form of assimilation. True, it would be wonderful to live under such a banner of freedom like that of the Federation, but is it truly Free when one is required and expected to agree to terms like the treaty with the Cardassians that left so many at the mercy of totalitarian overlords? Eddington was wrong in his characterization of Sisko and he certainly underestimated him, but he was not wrong about the Federation. He understood the greater message of what the Federation intended to stand for even when it did not live up to those values. I would argue that Eddington understood and bravely carried out the ethics of the Federation even when it wouldn't. Chakotay did the same and no one questions his conviction for what is right, true, and just.

A primal question that Eddington forces us to ask ourselves is if utopia indeed requires assimilation. I address what advances must be made to work towards a society that functions closer to a utopia on my longform post written as an Introduction to Interdisciplinary Violence Studies. While it is true that there must be a consistency in how education reform is carried out to work towards post-violence societies, that idea does not work towards assimilated masses. This is where Eddington is misunderstood. When he states that, "Nobody leaves paradise," he is clearly not referring to the ideas of the Federation, but instead to how the Federation compromises and falls away from its own declared values as it did with

the treaty with Cardassia. Eddington is actually standing up for Federation values. In that Michael Eddington is a hero. His virtues were also prophetic as can be seen later in the war with the Dominion when Cardassia became the central ally and homefront for Dominion forces. Eddington was right. With that in mind, in the future when viewers watch Eddington leave Starfleet for the Marquis, let us think of his foresight, his convictions, and his passion for justice, rather than his perceived crime of simply play-acting for Sisko.

Avery Brooks and His Understanding of Sisko

In a 1986 *Good Morning America* interview promoting the prime time show, *Spencer,* Avery Brooks was asked about another role he was playing in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for Showtime. The interviewer stated it was "against type casting, a very unusual thing" to which Avery Brooks replied, "No, not really. You know, I'm an artist. So I can do anything." Brooks's confidence in the dynamic range of his artistic abilities would come to light through the role and character arc of Benjamin Lafayette Sisko in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Through the serialization of the show and the mutually instilling character development there is a theme of what Avery Brooks discusses in a 1998 interview, that we are each the product of our past experiences. Avery states,

> I don't approach this work any differently than any other work; that I am the sum of every preceding moment and I bring all of that to bear on this present moment, yeah? And so I rarely step away from it and try to premeditate what is going to happen. Sometimes I am sure it works out okay and sometimes it doesn't. I mean, that is the nature of being human it seems to me. Once one starts to think that they are profound every single moment then, you know, I guess you can only do that in Hollywood, huh? We are fallible and we are imperfect and that's the thing that attracts me to continuing this role. It's that he is human and then we keep plumbing the depths of what that means to be human.

This theme of continuously becoming that Brooks relates in his interview is directly expressed in the premier episode of *Deep Space Nine*, "Emissary" (1993). When Commander Sisko and Lt. Dax discover the wormhole, what is later understood as being the Celestial Temple, the dwelling of the Bajoran gods simply referred to as the Prophets, Sisko finds he must define linear time to the Prophets (or "wormhole aliens" as they are also called). In so doing, he engages in an ontological survey of how time and self interact and inform the present. The Prophets adroitly integrate Sisko by manifesting themselves as those he knows from his real life. In this instance, first Kai Opaka and then his son, Jake:

Kai Opaka: Prove it?
Sisko: It can be argued that a human is ultimately the sum of his experiences.
Jake: Experiences? What is this?
Sisko: Memories. Events from my past, like this one.
Jake: Past?
Sisko: Things that happened before now. You have absolutely no idea what I'm talking about.
Jake: What comes before now is no different than what is now, or what is to come. It is one's existence.
Sisko: Then, for you, there is no linear time.

Perhaps the fact that the Prophets do not exist in linear time explains how at this moment they question what time is while having already separated themselves and visited Earth in the past to assure that Sisko was born. Or, this is just part of the testing of Sisko. Returning later to the Prophets's manifestation of Jake to speak with Sisko:

Jake: Then how can you take responsibility for your actions?
Sisko: We use past experiences to help guide us. For Jennifer and me, all the experiences in our lives

prepared us for the day we met on the beach, helped us recognize that we had a future together. When we married, we accepted all the consequences of that act, whatever they might be, including the consequences of you.

The Commander Sisko that comes out of the rebirthed wormhole dragging the Cardassian warship in tow – humiliated in simultaneous reluctation and acquiescence – is the Emissary we come to know. He is not immediately altered by the intractable and intimate experience with the Prophets just minutes ago. He is not even slightly surprised to find himself rescuing the insalubrious Gul Dukat, and in the process *Deep Space Nine*, as Major Kira was just about to surrender before the wormhole emerged once more. In fact, it is all oppositionally peremptory in act and signification. Kai Opaka saw the person, Benjamin Sisko, who he was to be without accoutrements of formal display. Opaka understood that “The person who does not wish to be among us is to be the Emissary.” Opaka saw outside of linear time into the irenic designs of the Prophets as they had perhaps not yet occurred, but had already been created. Sisko had yet to discover the Celestial Temple, but the Prophets had always already orchestrated a marriage with his father to assure that he was born.

Tuvok’s Moral Middle Ground

Tuvok was not without his forays into romance outside of the strict, sacred bond he held with his wife, T’Pel, in the Alpha Quadrant. True, there were manufactured instances of romance, such as in “Body and Soul” (2000) when Tom Paris prescribed Tuvok time in the holodeck with a hologram of his wife in order to treat his symptoms of pon farr. Just as Ben Sisko agreed to Solok’s terms of “manufactured triumph” (“Take Me Out to the Holosuite,” 1998), so, too, did Tuvok agree to manufactured romance. However, this was not only for the purposes of attenuating the symptoms of pon farr, but also out of Tuvok’s dire sense of duty and to return to helping the crew.

In “Gravity” (1999) it becomes clearer how Tuvok lives with his emotions just under the surface of his firm constitution. Tuvok and Tom Paris crash their shuttle onto a desert planet where they encounter, and come to live with, Noss. Feelings develop between Tuvok and Noss, though when confronted by Paris over the obvious connection between them, Tuvok states that he admires her for her adroit ability to survive.

TUVOK: She has been alone for many years. She appreciates our company.
PARIS: No. I mean she likes you.
TUVOK: What are you implying?
PARIS: Oh, come on, Tuvok. You may be cold, but you’re not blind.
TUVOK: Need I remind you that I am married.
PARIS: Your wife is fifty thousand light years away, in a different layer of space! The chances of you ever seeing her again are practically nonexistent.
TUVOK: Excuse me.

[…]

PARIS: Listen. What I said in there, about your wife. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings.
TUVOK: I have no feelings for you to hurt.
PARIS: I think you do. You work hard to bury them, but they’re there. And even if they’re not, this is home now. You might as well accept it and try to find as much happiness as you can. Listen, you have a chance to make a decent life for yourself here.
TUVOK: There is still a possibility that Voyager will rescue us. You may see Lieutenant Torres again.
PARIS: If I didn’t know you better, I’d say you were trying to cheer me up, Tuvok.
TUVOK: Is there a point to your pessimism?
PARIS: It’s not pessimism, it’s practicality. You of all people should understand that. Look, I’ve never met your wife but if she’s half a logical as you are, I bet you she’d tell you the same thing.
TUVOK: Your attempt to play matchmaker is misguided. I am not experiencing Pon farr.
PARIS: What difference does it make? You obviously care about Noss. If you won’t admit it to me, at least admit it to yourself.
TUVOK: I respect her ability to survive.
PARIS: It’s more than that. I’ve seen the way you look at her.
TUVOK: What way is that?
PARIS: Like someone who wishes he wasn’t Vulcan.

Tuvok faces his emotions for Noss in the end and quite exactingly. After the three are rescued from the planet and Noss is to be transported to her home planet, Tuvok shares an intimate mind meld with Noss that is clearly meant to convey his emotional predisposition. Noss's only response is, "I understand." Here, only after reaching the safety and comfort of being back aboard Voyager does Tuvok come clean, as it were, and allow himself to be vulnerable. Perhaps in the state of living under the duress of fighting for their survival, unlike Paris, Tuvok could not face the added encumbrance of emotional displacement. What is important is to keep in mind that, even still, those feelings were present during their time on the surface and if Tuvok had not flirted with the surfacing of those emotions, there would be no need for such an intimate goodbye.

This is all to say that Tuvok was not innocent. He played an equal role. His willful participation in what he claims to be far-distant from is also seen in "Alter Ego" (1997). Ensign Harry Kim comes to Tuvok in confidence for his assistance in overcoming emotions he has developed for a hologram. At first, Tuvok masterfully explicates the smallest dimensions of this infatuation in a way that Harry does not easily agree with, but is able to understand. By all accounts Tuvok's counsel was helping. Harry had found what at first he could not find, the will to be able to move on. This will was still nascent, but present, despite Harry's inability to adhere to it with discipline.

Perhaps Harry would have been able to overcome his feelings for a hologram with clarity and potential for growth had not Tuvok clearly betrayed his trust. Tuvok befriended the hologram, Marayna, who by this point had clearly altered her programming to fixate on him. Again, just as with Noss, Tuvok pretended not to notice Marayna taking interest in his interests. He, in fact, encourages it by repeatedly visiting the holodeck and telling Marayna she is not like anyone he has ever met before. It is only after it becomes clear that Marayna is not just a hologram, but being programmed and manipulated by an alien in a cloaked station inside the inversion nebula, that Tuvok restrains himself. Tuvok is able to beam onto the station and confront the alien who was motivated by loneliness to attempt to force Tuvok to stay with her. Now, seeing that this alien is not so visually appealing according to the social constructs of beauty, Tuvok treats her like an object of pity. Yes, in doing so the crisis is averted, but one wonders if Tuvok may have been motivated to stay on the station with her or coerce her into joining him on *Voyager* had she looked different.

Tuvok's on-the-surface-only romances are a form of manipulation. I have previously questioned Tuvok's ability to be manipulative in explicating the holo-mutiny in "Worst Case Scenario," (1997) stating, additionally, what of Tuvok in the manifestation of this crime? It was his imagination that brought this mutiny-play to life. Just as he was able to place himself among the Maquis and convincingly lie his way into a position of trust in "Caretaker" (1995), he is also able to manipulate his Vulcan born logic to performatively imagine a hostile takeover of the ship. Tuvok is not innocent. His intentions may be functional, but his abilities are transformative in the sense that from a Freudian perspective Tuvok is a carrier of manipulative traits and abilities.

What is more is that once Captain Janeway rejected Tuvok's proposal to permanently delete the holodeck program taking the crew's attention, Tuvok inserted himself into being an orchestrator of authoring its conclusion with Tom Paris. In an argument with Paris, Tuvok asserts his authority over the matter until Paris is capitulates as Tuvok's security code is required to reopen the parameters file to continue writing the program. Again, Tuvok's inherent need to control the situation is evident in his

behavior rather than his self-identifying language. This shows Tuvok relies on a host of manipulative techniques in matters of love, interpersonal direction, and tactical scenarios. Another example was his willingness to share the seeds of his Vulcan aggression with Guill in “Random Thoughts” (1997) in an effort to manipulate his way into the underground thought-sharing black market on the Mari homeworld as part of his investigation.

Unlike the holodeck simulation from “Worst Case Scenario,” Tuvok is central to an actual mutiny in “Repression” (2000). Under the seeded influence of Bajoran radical, Teero Anaydis, Tuvok unconsciously releases a conditioned, manipulated coercion into the minds of the former Maquis. He does this violently, one crew member at a time. Though Tuvok overcomes the repressed conditioning, it can be argued some part of him was willing to participate. This is not to engage in blaming the victim. It is clear what Teero Anaydis did to them was beyond cruel and there was a reason Teero was not accepted by the Marquis. However, from the perspective of being a Vulcan who puts great emphasis on purging emotions and unwanted thoughts, the strain of a manipulative personality was present that could carry out the brainwashing of the former Marquis *Voyager* crew. It can also be added that when Tuvok joined the now assembled Marquis crew he had already overcome Teero’s conditioning. He was playing along and manipulating the situation to his advantage as the skillful tactician he is.

All these behaviors result in observations made by the viewer. Tuvok has many noble attributes and he strives to serve the best interests of the ship. However, there are elements grafted into his character that seek to align his alien-ness with an Other. The viewer is ultimately to be dismissive of Tuvok despite his willingness to make sacrifices. Sacrifices such as in “Muse” (2000) when he went without sleep for ten days in effort to recover Harry Kim and B’Elanna.

NEELIX: Maybe I’ve miscounted but, I don’t think you’ve slept in ten days?
TUVOK: Your count is accurate.
NEELIX: Don’t you think you should go to bed?
TUVOK: As a Vulcan, I can function without sleep for more than two weeks.
NEELIX: But there’s a point of diminishing returns, when your mind starts to play tricks on you.
TUVOK: My mind, Mister Neelix, does not play tricks.

Many of the characters in *Voyager* are demonstrated to not be without their faults; Seven of Nine, B’Elanna, The Doctor and Tom Paris, for example. However, special emphasis is placed on Tuvok as a Vulcan. To return to “Take Me Out to the Holosuite,” Solok is equally portrayed as lacking insight into his own psychological state. That alien-ness is othered for the elevation of humanness is unfortunate and dismissive of the cosmic diversity Starfleet so claims to embrace.

Depersonalization and Violence in The Next Generation episode, “Violations,” and the Voyager episode, “Remember”

> “I think no one can deny the seed of violence remains within each of us. We must recognize that, because that violence is capable of consuming each of us.” – Jean-Luc Picard

In the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode, “Violations,” (1992) Counselor Deanna Troi is subject to forced thought insertion. What is highly important is that these experiences are not presented as being casual, passive experiences – temperate thoughts – but are actualized occurrences of violence, control, and devastating violations. These experiences are presented as more than just mere thought, but demonstrate the importance of mere thought. Thoughts are experienced. They are emotionally experienced through a lens of reality. What is more these forced displacements of internal harmony being committed by Jev, the Ullian onboard the *Enterprise*, result in a type of temporary coma, even with the manifestation of amnesia regarding the traumatic experience afterwards.

The presentation of the experience of thought insertion in “Violations” is so important because it reflects a true, though dramatized, lived experience of a portion of the 1% of the population that lives with schizophrenia (as well as some of the additional 1% that live with schizoaffective disorder) that have this particular symptom. To many, 1% does not seem like a significant portion of the population, but just think of how often in your day about town or passing through the city that you pass 100 people! Now imagine that 1 out of every 100 you have navigated in proximity to are suffering from these conditions. Then you start to see just how common these conditions are. This is not to mention the additional 4% to 6% also living with other terrorizing diagnoses. What gets missed in the mental health environment is that the experience of delusions and hallucinations are themselves, traumatic. Thought insertion is the clinical terms of the mis-belief that others are forcing thoughts into your mind. These are often negative thoughts, but not always so. This is not to be confused with another clinical symptom, thought broadcasting, which is the delusional experience that others can hear your thoughts to one degree or another. This can be experienced as isolated individuals or groups given privileged access to your mind, or, in some cases, everyone on Earth. (Sometimes these terms get grouped in with the delusional experience of the subject being able to force, willfully, specific thoughts into others’ minds.) As stated, what gets missed in the mental health field is how devastating these experiences are. However, that is not overlooked in “Violations” as evidenced with Troi’s reaction and response to recalling the traumatic episode. Thoughts themselves, can be a form of violence. The experience of foreign thoughts can be highly grim and disabling.

Lt. B’Elanna Torres also experiences what The Doctor refers to as “implanted thoughts” in the *Star Trek: Voyager* episode, “Remember” (1996). In a twist of circumstances from “Violations,” Jora, an Enaran elder on the ship, sought to make an historical mass murder (re)membered, (re)called, and (re)visioned through telepathic means for noble purposes by sharing, imposing her memories into first B’Elanna’s night dreams that later developed into day-visions that rendered her unconscious.

“It’s like each new dream advances the story,” B’Elanna tells Chakotay. “It feels like it’s actually happening. Physically, emotionally, it’s no different from real life. I’ve never had dreams like this before”

These were direct, lived experiences that coerced B’Elanna into a role of remembrance-ing. This is unlike Betazoid passive telepathy as Troi experiences, which is more a form of emotional clairvoyance with the exception of greater, clearer ability Troi has with other Betazoids. The Enarans’ ability is also far removed from the full potentiality of speech-telepathy Tuvok was able to engage in with Chief Examiner Nimira on the Mari homeworld (“Random Thoughts” 1997) or the full range of invasive mind reading Tam Elburn was able to detect with overwhelmingly precise umbrage in the episode “Tin Man” (1990). The fact that thought insertion is deleterious is shown in the symbolic timing of Jora sharing her final memories of the truth of Enarans’ history that coincides with her own death.

Jareth, the Enaran father figure in the (re)membered, (re)visioned experience B’Elanna is subjected through represents a seed of thought insertion’s form of manipulation. He coaxes Korenna into rejecting, even resenting, her lover and in that fact through extension the whole population of “regressives.” On the occasion that Korenna is told the “regressives” are not voluntarily being resettled, but instead, exterminated, Jareth whispers in her ear:

> “Now I know how hard it is for you to accept that anyone, even Regressives, could lie about something like that, but it is all part of their manipulation. These people have no conscience. They’ll say anything to get what they want. Like that boy Dathan. Has he told you he’s in love with you? He’s not. It’s his way of gaining your sympathy. And not only yours. I’ve seen him talking to quite a number of young women. Has he been asking you to trust him? He’s poisoning you against your own people, even your own family. That’s very cruel. No wonder you’ve been confused. But now you understand what these people are really like.”

The reality of the forced thought insertion can be fully understood in terms of the fact that B’Elanna stands witness to her lover, Dathan’s, execution and cheers. What began as a wonderful, amazing love affair that B’Elanna looked forward to re-experiencing, becomes a twisted journey of role presentation that is a complete opposite incantation of the person B’Elanna really is. This depersonalization that is the result of thought insertion represents the violence of foreign thought. Yet, there is liberation in truth, in shared memories. Just as there is a holistic path to recovering the truth for the Enarans, there must be truth in understanding and (re)calling that these experiences, dramatized or lived in a small, but important percentage of the population, must lead to a greater enforcement of empathy, sympathy, and compassion for atypical cognitive experiences.

The United Traits of Bajoran and Cardassian Resistance

The heart of the Bajoran resistance was to cripple, stun, defeat, and alienate any element present of the Cardassian occupation. When Captain Sisko orders Colonel Kira to assist Damar with his struggling Cardassian uprising against the Dominion she is at first taken back. It is laughable. At the first instance of the suggestion and on the surface it is certainly an insult to the sacrifices made by the Bajoran resistance. It seemingly does not honor the lives lost in the struggle. Nor does it appear to be justice for those elements that struggled for freedom in the occupation to assist and combine forces with the aggressor in their time of struggle.

However, Kira relents. She is not just following orders. She understands that the small forces that Damar has gathers against the Dominion needs a better strategy. Kira understands the Cardassian resistance would greatly benefit from freedom fighter training. Cardassian think militarily in terms of large operations with targeted plans and very orderly variables. However, they are also fighting those Cardassians that have not yet alienated the Dominion. It is a slow process for the larger Cardassian movement to come around. With the token element of surprise and strategic accommodation that Kira can provide, she can make this movement successful. Furthermore, with the aid of Garak and even finding herself on Cardassia Prime, she moves into the heart of the movement with just as much vigor, relevance, and occupancy as Kira was in the Bajoran resistance. There is no doubt, Colonel Kira is a Cardassia freedom fighter; struggling and struck in a basement with Damar and Garak.

Kira memories of those struggles on Bajor, we are often reminded, are complex and painful. She recounts more than once that she is not proud of the things she did in the resistance, but that she did it for the good of Bajor, for Bajoran freedom. In *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine's* "Duet" we also encounter the ranks of Cardassian evil as an individual who appears to be Gul Darhe'el confesses to atrocities committed in the Gallitep labor camp. We encounter, with immediacy, Kira's passion for justice for the Bajoran people, but we also experience Kira compassion for a man mad with guilt who in reality did not play a significant role in the activities at Gallitep. We see that Kira's passion runs deep; it is instilled in the fiber of her context and critical thinking mechanisms. Her strategic alertness is moved by Damar's Caradassian uprising and just as the Cardassians retained no mercy for the Bajoran people – on that same swinging inclination – Kira joins a Cardassian struggle that is marked with a new consciousness, and a fresh alertness to reason, that to be independent from tyranny is the primary goal of any peoples. Kira related intimately with this season of struggle.

Empathetically there is a Yin and Yang to the Bajoran and Cardassian resistance. There is a targeted reason to a shared history and a remarkable insistence of a resemblance of order and united goals. Without the true nature of the hallmark of the Bajoran resistance, the Cardassian uprising would have no context from which to move. The success and very motion of the Cardassian struggle owes existence to perils and achievements of the Bajoran rejection of the occupation. There is a seed of worth; of interconnectedness and grows and establishes itself through commonality of shared syntax of goals and brings different peoples together for the most urgent reasons and shatters the holy bonds of

disagreement and dissension. What we experience watching Kira shape and confine Damar's movement is the realization of shared goals for a common destiny of independence and self-worth.

When Kira with Garak, Damar, and his followers find themselves locked outside of Dominion headquarters, they share in the struggle – they laugh together. They have become united through shared equity of emotion and the lambast of rejecting that which divides any peoples from an opportunity for independent prosperity. Damar has lost his wife and children in the struggle. Casey Biggs, who plays Damar said in an interview that had he known that Damar had a wife and children he would have played the character differently. However, Damar, who once fought by the side and defended Gul Dukat at any cost, has not completed his road to redemption; for himself or the Cardassian people. He must also give his life storming the Dominion last stronghold having made the case for Cardassians to fight "For Cardassia" and not for control of the quadrant or power bestowed by the Dominion. Damar's saving grace was his ability to see the cause of the struggle, not just in Cardassian terms, but in a higher collective order that identified with those they oppressed in the Bajoran occupation and the more grand union of the Federation's interest and empathy with his cause.

"For Cardassia" is not just for Cardassians, but for all who are prepared to unite for common interests, even with Bajorans and the Federation, towards that shared goal of individualism and liberty of cause.

Narrative Obtrusion and Difference in the Deep Space Nine episode “In the Pale Moonlight” and Enterprise’s “Damage”

There is a highly reasonable, shared pattern of reluctant leadership for Captain Sisko and Captain Archer between the *Deep Space Nine* episode “In the Pale Moonlight” (1998) and *Enterprise’s* “Damage” (2004). As Archer tells Dr. Phlox, amid almost complete destruction of the *Enterprise,* “I’m about to step over a line. A line I thought I would never cross. And given the nature of our mission, it probably won’t be the last.” The damage to the ship, the coronary damage to the vessel, the damage to T’Pol’s body and mind from the trellium d addiction is representative of the damage to Captain Archer and his crew’s values as they embark on robbing the Illyrian ship. This damage is the destruction to all our vessels, those spacefaring as well as the bodily vessel in T’Pol’s case.

There is really only one Narrative Obtrusion, or rationalization given that excuses the deed in the eye of the viewer. That is the fact that Degra and the Amphibians have left Archer strict instructions that they only have three days to conference with them, and potentially stop the Xindi plan to destroy Earth. Not only is this a powerful Narrative Obtrusion, it is a mighty motivator in the distress of the moment to take any action to accomplish their goal. The Illyian captain (played by Casey Biggs who also appears as Damar in “In the Pale Moonlight”) confronts Archer as the last of the boarding party is leaving the Illyian ship, “You’re stranding us three years from home. Why are you doing this?” Archer responds, “Because I have no choice.”

No choice. The episode is structured in such a way that it is difficult to disagree. The *Enterprise’s* warp coil could not be repaired. Trip stated that it has to be replaced, but they did not have the parts. The Illyian warp coil was easily modified to help get to the crew to the rendezvous with Degra at a warp 3.2. To have missed the conference would not only mean missing the best chance they have had so far to save Earth, but additionally, the entire region as the expanse would have eventually grown and allowed the transdimensional beings to destroy all the planets in the larger system. Archer said he has no choice and afterwards Trip assures him that he “did the right thing,” but there is an element of a forced hand. There was no correct way forward, but only the achievable way forward. Ideally, after Earth was saved another ship, if not *Enterprise* herself, should have returned to the expanse to assist the Illyian crew and provide them with a warp coil. I do not believe they are ever mentioned again.

This toxic forced hand, moving behind Archer an enveloping these decision-making motivations and vulnerabilities is also behind Captain Sisko in “In the Pale Moonlight.” For both Archer and Sisko they successfully avoid blaming fate, but take responsibility for their own actions, their own course of action, and their own will to power to make the choices that alter the lives of others. When Grathon Tolar attempted to murder Quark and Sisko found himself bribing Quark not to press charges, Sisko felt the pause of the forced hand giving way, allowing room for Sisko to escape from this strategy to bring

the Romulans into the war on the side of the Federation. Captain Sisko remarked in his now deleted log,

> "That was my first moment of real doubt, when I started to wonder if this whole thing was a mistake. So I went back to my office, and there was a new casualty list waiting for me. People are dying out there every day. Entire worlds are struggling for their freedom and here I am still worrying about the finer points of morality. No, I have to keep my eye on the ball, win the war, those were the priorities, so I pushed on and every time another doubt appeared before me I just found another way to shove it aside"

Captain Sisko passionately wants "the finer points of morality" to win over in this negotiation to manipulate the Romulans, but he understands the "conscience of one Starfleet officer" is a small price to save millions of lives with the help of a new ally. Of course, it is not just his conscience that is sacrificed in this scheme. It also cost the lives of Grathon Tolar and Senator Vreenak, in addition to the Romulans who accompanied the Senator. The Narrative Obtrusion offered in this plan to force the Romulans into the war is the narrative prop of the casualty report that is repeatedly posted by Benjamin Sisko. That reminder of the constant cost of war is an aesthetic for the yearning for justice, closure, and swift peace. The Romulans offer that hope. Therefore, Sisko's actions can be understood by the viewer. The viewer is further justified to play a supporting role because Starfleet Command gives their approval for Sisko's (really, Garak's) plan.

The primary difference is there is no dissenting voice is offered to Sisko. There is only Garak coercing him into his stationed role. However, in "Damage" T'Pol does offer a passionate disposition of voluntary disobedience to the entire concept of abandoning moral authority for the sake of victory.

T'Pol proclaims,

> "We are no different than the marauders that attacked us when we entered the expanse"
> "We're a lot different," Archer responds
> T'Pol continues, "By stealing their warp coil we could be condemning them to death" […] We can't save humanity without holding on to what makes us human. Those were your words to me."
> "I'm no happier doing this than you are, but we're not going to make a habit of it," states Archer.
> "Once you rationalize the first misstep it's easier to fall into a pattern of behavior," T'Pol warns.

T'Pol is speaking here not only with moral authority, but also as the voice of experience. Her trellium d addiction was a misstep she rationalized that became a pattern of behavior. She understands and fears, fear intensified while experiencing withdrawal symptoms, that this will be the new *Enterprise*. She fears, while at the edge of madness and overwhelming emotions, this is the new frontier for humanity. All the warnings that Vulcans have issued for humanity not to enter the galactic neighborhood too soon are becoming realized for T'Pol in this moment as having been reasonable after all. She, among the few Vulcans, felt that humanity was ready and they were unfairly judged by the majority of Vulcans, but in this panicked moment she feels the esteem of her heritage that humans offer only more darkness to the established galactic discourse. She is also reflecting what for Archer and Sisko is the problem of too

much empathy. In these scenarios that empathy must be drowned out for reluctant reason or a greater empathetic cause.

This discourse, however, is not what is maintained by the *Enterprise*. Against all odds, she is a ship of arrival, arrival to a new pact of commonality and shared concerns. In a twist, Captain Sisko repeats the line “I can live with it” to his personal log before instructing the computer to delete his confession. “I can live with it,” Sisko offers. Here, like Archer, Sisko is removing the forced hand of fate from this narrative of forward movement. He instead accepts responsibility as a token behavior to the response given to an experienced officer who must move with and aside the forces that wish to control, intervene, and establish its own rule. No, Sisko proclaims. I will live with it. No, Archer commands. I will honor the lives lost so far so that no more will be sacrificed and we will build a common language with our neighbors.

Holo-Morals

The holodeck, or holosuites, offer a grand rejection of reality. However, it is through that dismissal of the restraints of reality that we see the crews of *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine* inject themselves into a cascade of criminal conduct. In the *Voyager* episode “Worst Case Scenario” (1997) and the *Deep Space Nine* episode “Badda-Bing, Badda-Bang” (1999), the crews negotiate with everyday ethics towards the end-goal of spirited competition and fantasy (as was the case with “Worst Case Scenario) or dramatically specific deterrence – without guilt – from moral behavior (such as with “Badda-Bing, Badda-Bang”).

The framing of the necessity of holodecks and holosuites as a location for ethical abandonment:

The mutiny holoprogram in “Worst Case Scenario” was initially authored by Tuvok as a training program for Starfleet security not long after *Voyager* was stranded in the Delta Quadrant. Having had the crew combined between Starfleet and Maquis, Tuvok wanted a simulation to train security officers to prepare for a possible real-life mutiny that he foresaw as a possibility; a possibility he soon felt was less likely as the two crews began to work so well together. Tuvok attempted to delete the program, but when B’Ellana discovered it soon dozens of the crew were eager to play out this salacious, scandal-ridden holoprogram and participate in a mutiny that would result in stealing *Voyager*, leaving Captain Janeway and the senior officers stranded in the Delta Quadrant, and doing whatever it took to get back home without regard to Starfleet regulations.

It is not just a fantasy of mutiny, it’s a daydream enactment of the dismissal of duty.

Similarly, the plan to steal $1 million from Frankie Eyes’s casino in “Badda-Bing, Badda-Bang” is framed as necessity. The programmer behind Vic Fontaine’s lounge had embedded an easter egg that overthrew the lounge king and replaced the classic Las Vegas hotel scenario with a mafia-run gambling establishment; all with a unique history that tied back to Vic’s childhood. The crew of *Deep Space Nine* conceive of the plan to rob the casino with the noble effort of restoring the Vic holoprogram’s original programming.

However, there is no transition from ethical conduct to unethical conduct in the carrying out of the plan. For each of the players there is an immediate and instinctual understanding of how to adroitly manipulate, according to their own resources, weaknesses and timing in the events of the holoprogram for the benefit of the crime. There is, arguably, one reason to perform this crime: to free Vic’s from the mafia-ridden easter egg, but the actors in the crime are all too willing – and able – to commit an act normally too egregiously and personally hands-on for even some Ferengi.

What can we deduce about the true nature of the participants of these holocrimes?

B’Ellana and Paris did have some redeemable qualities as they initially participated in stealing *Voyager* and overthrowing Janeway. B’Ellana was, at first, visibly nervous. She was uncertain if even the fictional act was a measure of the temperament expected in the standard behavior for an officer on *Voyager.* Paris, too, initially fought back on the bridge and tried to prevent the mutiny; that is, before he turned and engaged in immersively engrossing himself in contributing to the act. It could be said that

Tom Paris's ability to subdue his conscience and "play along" with the nuances of make-believe mutiny give credence to his additional acting abilities as a character that we see represented in "Investigations" (1996) when he fools the crew into thinking he has grown frustrated with his duties on *Voyager* and leaves the ship.

However, for most of the players in the mutiny "game" there is unreserved enjoyment in the very concept of betrayal by violent insurgence. Additionally, what of Tuvok in the manifestation of this crime? It was his imagination that brought this mutiny-play to life. Just as he was able to place himself among the Maquis and convincingly lie his way into a position of trust in "Caretaker" (1995), he is also able to manipulate his Vulcan born logic to performatively imagine a hostile takeover of the ship. Tuvok is not innocent. His intentions may be functional, but his abilities are transformative in the sense that from a Freudian perspective Tuvok is a carrier of manipulative traits and abilities. These abilities we see are also present in the crew as they laughingly play out the mutiny fantasy. Tuvok is so talented with this work that he stands alone in the ability to capture the imagination of others in how they relate to these criminal fantasies.

Likewise, or the crew of *Deep Space Nine*, they eagerly participate in the theft that will lead to the holomurder of Frankie Eyes. They are first-born participants in the crime and accessories to holomurder. What of the ethical implications of killing a holocharacter? The carry-through of the crime of theft, again, like Tuvok, was functional, but the holomurder was essentially premeditated. How is this different from when Ibudan murders his clone in the holosuite in "A Man Alone" (1993)? As Odo states, murdering your own clone is still murder. Considering the fact that Vic Fontaine is near sentient, it is natural that the following conclusion for scientists and Starfleet officers would be to at least give a second thought to committing an act that would lead to holomurder.

Though, of course, those considerations are never given to characters in the holosuites of *Deep Space Nine* and the holodecks of *Voyager* and *Enterprise*. There is an exception with the case of James Moriarty, but even he was locked inside a matrix of a closed circuit to prevent him from reappearing with, as Moriarty states, no real consideration on how to free his program. Only *Voyager's* Doctor enjoyed the compassion privileged for sentience and even so that was more of a measure that was barely tolerated. Given the abject denial of rights it is a miracle that the Doctor was allowed to grow to the extent that he was and it is equally no surprise that a clan-family of holograms sought out their own independence in "Flesh and Blood" (2000) who themselves were subject to repeated ritual murder and torture.

The theft of the $1 million from Frankie Eyes's casino was treated as just another mission for the crew of *Deep Space Nine*. Bashir, Nog, O'Brien, Kira, Dax, Odo, even Kasidy, all envelope themselves to the cause. Only Sisko at first finds the act distasteful, though that rejection is based on the realities of the historical representation of Las Vegas in the program that in truth was still segregated and did not present equal opportunities for African Americans; a historical inaccuracy that repels Captain Sisko. Still, Sisko is eventually drawn into to the cause by Kasidy and plays a pivotal role in succeeding with the crime. All hands commit to the theft and all those involved are responsible for the holomurder that follows. For a crew that is largely representative of that which is in opposition of Gul Dukat, they each for certain fail purity tests typically reserved for heroes.

What we can take away is that the crews of *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine* are left to linger in their acts and lives as officers and scientists and in that space they find reluctance towards the rejuvenation of consistent moral stances. It is not atypical for moral actors to be presented with tests, with abject appraisals of what it means to be alive in an unequal galaxy that acts upon participants of universal order with shielding integrity or dismissive reprehension. However, like faith in life's natural order, we see these participants play to the role of comfortable normativity. Without the sequence of stellar heights that enable their persuasion that they are, in fact, moral, there is little preserved in the way of a convenience of order that neatly fits in a bottle of transpiring consequential contemplative time. They are, with aptitude, cohorts of moral performers reacting to the binds of integrity, though that does not cement a consistency of trembling creed.

Star Trek Enterprise's "Dear Doctor" and Voyager's "Nothing Human"

In *Star Trek Enterprise's* "Dear Doctor" (2002), Dr. Phlox hopes and aspires to not cure a global population suffering from a spreading disease that is killing them by the millions. Dr. Phlox would prefer not to find a cure. Such a harsh dialectic tone coming from the doctor invades our sense of ethics while turning our senses inward. Much like how Captain Archer responded when he told Dr. Phlox that he had reconsidered his position. Previously Archer insisted that Phlox discover a cure for the Valakians. Phlox, however, articulated that curing this dying race would not be ethical. Their illness was not a virus or pathogen, but biological, an evolutionary trait that coincided with evolutionary advances of the Menk, the other humanoid species that shared the planet. Upon asking Archer to reconsider, he states,

I have reconsidered. I spent the whole night reconsidering, and what I've decided goes against all my principles. Someday my people are going to come up with some sort of a doctrine, something that tells us what we can and can't do out here, should and shouldn't do. But until somebody tells me that they've drafted that directive I'm going to have to remind myself every day that we didn't come out here to play God.

With that the seeds of the Prime Directive were born. It is noteworthy that the Prime Directive is being fleshed out while in the background other species have already visited the Valakians, though did not assist them for completely different reasons:

This episode establishes the basis of what would become the Prime Directive. In this episode there is a clear contrast in moral authority between the Ferengi, who do not help the Valakians because there are no financial gains to be made, and humans, who must make the very difficult decision not only to not share warp technology, but not even a cure for the genetic mutation in the interest of the greater scheme of evolutionary blueprints and architecture.

Though not a scientist in the manner that Dr. Phlox is, Archer still comes to agree with Phlox's insights that though he had indeed discovered a cure, they would be altering, invading the biological and evolutionary sentencing of the planet. I argue that, despite being as argumentative as it is, this is not the real push-back being given in this scene.

What is really happening is the arc of the human story. Ethics of evolutionary biology, most often referred to as evolutionary ethics, states that natural selection acts upon ethical sensibilities just as it does for any other fitness. What is being contemplated in this episode is the advancement of the human species. When Archer decides not to give the Valakians the cure, he is symbolizing a humanity that plays an accelerated ethical role matching its scientific progress that allows us to navigate to distant planets. Phlox directly refers to trusting humanity to make the right decisions, the ethical and difficult, "If I hadn't trusted him [Archer] to make the right choice I'd have been no better than the Vulcan

diplomats who held your species back because they felt you couldn't make proper decisions on your own." In many ways the Valakians mirrors what humanity could have been.

At one point Archer brings up the possibility of staying with the Valakians and teaching them how to build a warp capable spacecraft, to which T'Pol states, "The Vulcans stayed to help Earth ninety years ago. We're still there." There was also foreshadowing in the episode of the nuances of the Prime Directive. When they discover the drifting Valakian ship Archer questions T'Pol regarding the ability to interfere, to which T'Pol articulates that they have already been in contact with two warp capable species, therefore, the risk for adverse overexposure to technology and outer planetary life was low. Through these experiences, with the Valakians and the Menk, humanity is actively composing what will be their guiding laws in the cosmos, to rest and refrain from harsh interference in the natural course of events; guiding laws that will be exercised and explored even further in the series with the Temporal Prime Directive.

However, *Star Trek* does not abate more direct and actionable laws and guidance. Years after the Prime Directive has been firmly established, there are still the tremors of the echoes of even older ethical boundaries that have been declared not to be crossed circumventing the lived realities of the crew of Voyager. In *Star Trek: Voyager's* "Nothing Human" (1998) a seemingly more active doctrine is exposed as testing the humanity of Voyager and its ethical disposition while in the distant Delta Quadrant.

In "Nothing Human" the Doctor was forced to rely on the experience and insights of Cardassian exobiologist, Dr. Crell Moset, in hologram form, to assist in releasing B'Elanna from the grasp of a parasitic alien.

Dr. Crell Moset possessed the skill and knowledge to save B'Elanna's life, but only due to the experience he gained through grotesque experiments and tortures committed against the Bajoran people. Are we to save and preserve life with knowledge gained through mass atrocity? The evolution of medical sciences in the 18th and 19th centuries did just that. James Marion Sims performed painful experiments on enslaved Black women which led to him being credited as the "father of modern gynecology." The source of preservation for some comes at the cost of extinguishing the lives of others. The violence-narratives of cyclical familial trauma creates a tension of permanence and retreat from that permanence to an earlier state is not what makes us whole but is derivative of sequestered lies and intoxicated moments of release.

This episode cements the tenets of The Nuremberg Code's first action, that "The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential." Further adding the Declaration of Helsinki, which the fourth general principle states, "It is the duty of the physician to promote and safeguard the health, well-being and rights of patients, including those who are involved in medical research." Though at first arguing for the Moset's usefulness, The Doctor comes to confirm members of the crew's stance of the ethics of retaining a holoprogram that was gifted only by its degrees of torture, stating "It is my judgment that the Medical Consultant Program and all the algorithms contained therein shall be deleted from the database. In light of recent evidence, I cannot in good conscience utilize research that was derived from such inhuman practices." Interestingly, it took time for The Doctor, a hologram himself, to reach the same conclusion that B'Elanna and Tabor had instinctively. Tabor, having lost his brother and grandfather to Moset's experiments, was a humanoid witness to a holographic computer simulation on

a ship where Chief Medical Officer was a simulation himself. Clearly, the repose of the Bajoran testimony is never actually at rest, but such guidance is always needed as we face more and more conflation between our humanoid commanding officers and decision makers and reliance on AI and computer technologies. Without doubt, The Doctor would not have so easily come to see Tabor's and B'Ellana's perspective, or the tenets of The Nuremberg Code and Declaration of Helsinki without persuasion in the humanoid form.

The Doctor trusted too much in his own innate gifts just as be initially trusted in the gifts of Dr. Crell Moset. The echo chamber was only disrupted through the testimony of Bajoran suffering, a testimony not sought out or easily accepted by the simulation of the holder and possessor of medical ethics programming and databases. The Doctor is not completely to blame. Captain Janeway commanded that The Doctor allow Moset to assist him to save B'Ellana's life and, furthermore, that all consequences from that rested with her. However, it is interesting to contemplate what how ethical boundaries are consistent when Archer makes a choice that permits the deaths of millions while Janeway makes a choice that saves the life of just one.

A Partial Relationship between Admiral Picard and Elim Garak

In season one of *Star Trek: Picard*, on Chateau Picard, Admiral Jean-Luc Picard (retired) navigates his time as though lost, recovering, living out his days with bitterness under the surface that is enlaced with dignity. As Picard comes to accept that the galaxy is calling to him to reignite his sense of purpose, he comments, “Sitting here all these years. […] I haven’t been living. I’ve been waiting to die.” (“Remembrance” 2020). In a very real sense, on Chateau Picard, our Captain is living out an exile. An exile from Starfleet. An exile from the stars.

Starfleet, he felt, had betrayed him and had betrayed its mission. Picard resigned to protest the technocratic changes that have enveloped the service. This left him abandoned, from his universal and worldly perspective. Just as Garak sought out a solitude of protection on *Deep Space Nine*, Picard returned to his family vineyard a shell of the man he was. His ambition tossed. His participation departed. His memories only that, past memories without the will of presence to discover new fissures in spacetime that animate the senses of well-being in life.

Picard summarizes Dahi’s purpose for seeking him out, with a hint of self-destain, stating, “She came here to find safety. Like you, Zhaban. Like me.” Safety. Picard was never a man to be satisfied with the simplicity of a safe life. This exile, though different from Garak’s exile which was not self-imposed, tells the viewer a great deal about the person Picard is outside of his Campbell-like hero’s journey. So, too, Garak’s initial time on DS9 is a waning away from the business of being in the center of the climax of the ruse of the day. Picard, Captain of the flagship *Enterprise*, was a leader first to respond. Garak, understudy and protege of Enabran Tain who was the head of the Obsidian Order, was involved in all matters “for Cardassia” only to find himself composed not to a vineyard, but a tailor shop pretending to be content with his satisfied customer’s reviews on Yelp.

Garak was not content. His solitude and discomfort living as an only Cardassian in bright, cold places drove him to become a drug addict (“The Wire” 1994). He blew up his own shop to encourage an investigation that would allow him to get involved again in Cardassian affairs (“Improbable Cause” 1995). Not once, but twice he left his domain of exile in search of Tain – who imposed this exile – just to be assured that Tain was safe (“In Purgatory’s Shadow” 1997). No, Garak was not content to remain a tailor. When the Dominion War offered him more opportunities to unite his efforts with Starfleet he accepted the terms of any condition which might bring about an end to his exile.

For Picard, he is awakened out of the domestic duties of his inner tailor shop. Dahj and the realization that his personal past is not yet past, but continues to exist in contention drives him to resurface from dormant digressions of solitude and comfort. Picard, like Garak, finds himself – rediscovers his purpose – alongside the alertness of removing himself, willingly, from the platitudes of familiar exile and domestic restraint. With new purpose comes an arrival. For Garak, it was the (ending of the)

Dominion War that brought him home. For Picard, his reason to return to sterile space is the urgency of a sense of required completion for a past that has yet to settle away from dreams.

What separates the Borg Queen from Michael Burnham?

What separates the Borg Queen from Michael Burnham? On the surface the Borg Queen is composed of an archetype of a matriarch repeatedly referred to as the greatest evil Starfleet has encountered. Before Captain Janeway intentionally locates the Borg in *Star Trek: Voyager's* "Scorpion," (1997) she research previous Captain's logs,

JANEWAY: I've been looking through the personal log entries of all the Starfleet Captains who encountered the Borg. I've gone over every engagement, from the moment Q flung the Enterprise into the path of that first Cube to the massacre at Wolf 359. Every battle, every skirmish. anything that might give me an insight into the mind of the Collective.
CHAKOTAY: And?
JANEWAY: In the words of Jean-Luc Picard. 'In their Collective state, the Borg are utterly without mercy, driven by one will alone: the will to conquer. They are beyond redemption, beyond reason.' And then there's Captain Amasov of the Endeavour. 'It is my opinion that the Borg are as close to pure evil as any race we've ever encountered.'

Though, out of "Scorpion" came the liberation of Seven of Nine. We see the adamant trials of her trauma later, in "Raven," (1997) as she retraces and recovers the location of her assimilation on the USS Raven now abandoned on a moon B'omar space. Captain Picard still suffers from nightmares six years after his assimilation in *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996). In the *Voyager* episode, "Unimatrix Zero" (2000) a select few of the Borg surface into an interconnected reality during regeneration cycles that functions as a space of free thought and coherent identity; a lived subconscious cycle of reality formation without the horrors and pains of group-possession and cybernetic oppression. The Borg Queen serves as guide and witness of the collective, as an instrument of territorialization over selfhood and autonomy. Again, what separates the Borg Queen from Michael Burnham?

Consider this: Captain Lorca in *Star Trek: Discovery* is the collective. His true identity more closely resembles the ruthlessness of the Borg compared to Prime, Federation citizens, yes, but that is not the point being sought. Lorca, when we meet him in *Star Trek: Discovery* season one, without any hint of masquerade captures Burnham, separates her from her planned destiny, and forces her to serve. She is without rank or formal post, she is without a territory of her own. Even if Burnham were to be in prison, it would be the natural cycle of events from her own choices, her free will. Under Lorca that free will is severed as she must perform as a stand in, imbuing her talents for the good of the group; Burnham's resourcefulness is assimilated by Lorca and her uniqueness is made without for the benefit of others. It is only through the generosity and kindness of those on board Discovery, still possessors of free will and coherent identity, the offer light for her stern composure.

Perhaps now, these differences between us do not seem to offer such a wide gaze? Federation citizens are much closer to the Borg than what lies in their programmed actions, their malfeasance of seemingly

willful course and unilateral direction. The Borg are another mirror universe offered inside our own. What stands in the way of our own destiny but ourselves, we are taught. That sentiment holds no meaning under complete and uncooperative assimilation. The terror of forced denial of self is a symbol of the ages of what we all absorb in small fractions, some more than others, along the pathway of our life's work, our busy-ness, what we hold true and how much of that comes from the core of the inner self and what is absorbed from without.

However, the Borg are hostages of bio-technological terror. A precise prescient warning of technology's advances, impressive even for Star Trek. If even Michael Burnham can be captured by Mirror Lorca and forced to commit to his will, what more can the rest of us find ourselves subject to? That fear and reality of descent is the Borg. The Borg queen is equally a victim. She has no precise matrix of informed identity remaining. What was once a sentient being has been so overwritten by code and sequence that even with her elevated status of independence, nothing remains but formulated posture of the firm and concrete identity that selfless possession is group possession.

The Borg are a circus mirror to sainthood, but beneath those glowing expenditures are the true saints, deeply withdrawn as we see in the Star Trek: Picard episode, "The End is the Beginning" (2020). The Romulans are practicing, in their own cautious and classified manner, a liberal form of Borg liberation not unlike how Picard was treated after he was no longer Locutus of Borg. He was not seen as responsible for his actions. Still with substandard medical practices, the Romulans are not having the success that Dr. Crusher had with Picard or that Janeway and the Doctor had with Seven of Nine. The Romulan, former Borg drones are kept in isolation where Hugh permits Soji. There is an immediate threat. There appears to be a great lack of state of the art rehabilitation occurring here. What is clear is the trauma. The naked, undiluted trauma of having once been only to become without and maybe not even possess the inner hope to find oneself out of the cognitive isolation of a recovered drone.

The Borg queen would think nothing of the sight of the Romulan former drones. They would only be targets for re-assimilation. She is a programmed despot without any free will of her own. In Dr. Judith Herman's illustrative text, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, she summarizes the all-serving congruence of the service desired by those in power:

> The desire for total control over another person is the common denominator of all forms of tyranny. Totalitarian governments demand confession and political conversion of their victims. Slaveholders demand gratitude from their slaves. Religious cults demand ritualized sacrifices as a sign of submission to the divine will of the leader. Perpetrators of domestic battery demand that their victims prove complete obedience and loyalty by sacrificing all other relationships. (2015, 76)

The Borg queen, having been a witness to the entirety of the Borg race's assimilation, destruction, and consequential forceful and aggressively violent performance of further conquest of the victim of circumstances. Whether she was ever an individual or created by Borg indexes, she is the resulting expectation of taught tyranny. Her programmed guide was enlisted, a forced collaboration of merciless militant endeavors. She is the most in need of savings. As such it can be seen, to save one would be to save an entire civilization.

Deviance, Occupation, and Terrans

When the crew of *Discovery* crosses into the mirror universe, they embark on a path of willingness to cross moral boundaries. This is largely at the guidance of Lorca, who for reasons later discovered has his own primary deviance to tally for the benefit of the limited few that does not include Michael and the crew. Lorca demands that they become as ruthless as their counterparts are in this mirror world; they must shape themselves into a behavioral model of revulsion and cruelty ("Despite Yourself" 2018). Michael Burnham and Ash Tyler accept Lorca's bidding to imitate a gesture that is more than performative, they must act out an applied callousness that meets the demands of the circumstance.

What can this be compared to? From one perspective, the Bajoran underground crossed moral boundaries in defense of their home-world – committing violent crimes with the intent to murder not just Cardassian soldiers, but those that accompanied them as well. Kira readily admitted to exceeding the limits of the morality of norms, telling Jadzia, "When you take someone's life, you lose a part of your own as well" ("Blood Oath" 1994). Captain Sisko, in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine's* "In the Pale Moonlight," (1998) and Captain Archer, in *Star Trek: Enterprise's* "Damage," (2004) also crossed the seals of their own internal ethical guidance and in such a way that when they took solitary responsibility of their actions it gave the illustrative appearance of a form of nobility, however debatable that is.

Pat Lauderdale writes in his essay, "Deviance and Moral Boundaries," in the *American Sociological Review* that deviance into crossing moral boundaries is often the result of being confronted with one of two conditions. Our moral boundaries "might be threatened by (1) realignment of power within social systems or (2) emergence of a threat (e.g., new adversaries) from outside the system" (661, 1976). Having been relocated into a mirror universe dominated by Terran autocrats qualifies as a "realignment of power" that successfully (re)shapes and confirms Michael's ability to (re)frame her active perspective and willingness of action. The Occupation of Bajor by the Cardassians equally qualifies as the "emergence" of new adversaries (though, historically, Cardassians and Bajorans were not new to one another (see *Deep Space Nine*, "Explorers," 1995) that allowed for a new shaping of morality in which aggressive pursuits could dominate what it meant to be good freedom loving people.

Truly the mirror universe is a tent-post for permission to cross into other-than-self territory. We see this in Sisko's reprehensible behavior in "Through the Looking Glass" (1995) when he permits himself to sleep with mirror Jadzia and with true Berman-esque masculine sexism, this tolerated deviance is never mentioned again; without due discourse Prime Sisko ultimately goes on to a form of immortality while Prime Jadzia ultimately dies.

Recourse for the adamant bounds of persuasion into what is permitted and what is gained through crossed ethical thresholds is complementary to the tide of derision from the perception of the viewer. It is interesting to note that from the beginning it is Michael Burnham and Ash Tyler that are expected to dominate the mission to infiltrate Terran territory while Lorca – an actual Terran – resolves to play the role of victim, with a harmonic stealth that eventually results in mirror Philippa Georgiou crossing barriers into a norm of decency, displacing Terran manners into a formal regression that, perhaps, mimics the very will of self that is our own Prime playacting of moral direction and behavioral

discretion. It must be without discrepancy that it is in this mirror location that Ash Tyler uncovers the identity as Voq; as the extremist inside is part of us all, we only need the means to channel it.

Rights and Responsibilities: Addressing Love and Violence in a Post-Capitalist World

Love is always wise: So I heard a voice, perhaps it was a bird, telling me. At first, this is offensively incorrect. It means rejecting all means of self-protection, all methods of self-preservation. This is not the world we live in. We live in a fraught world of assorted love where real psychological, financial, emotional, and life-threatening hard won minor entries into worn journals seek solace in lost and broken stories told by broken older people, more experienced people. In fact, it is the responsibility of those of us who have learned from experience to teach the younger generation the realities of the illusions of love.

But upon further reflection, yes, indeed, to live as a saint, a holy and right way – as though there is an after-presence that we should all be striving to locate ourselves in a correct and upright position, then yes, we should always choose love. But truly, who can do that? These seems like one of those occasions when we can say no person can really live in such a way, at least not all the time, and certainly not always selflessly. That is, without self-interest getting intermingled in the manner of such an approach to life.

Perhaps it is possible. What a beautiful end to one's life to have lived that way. This being true whether there is an afterlife awaiting with rewards of esteem and euphoria or not. Or not. That is a lot to think about. We are indeed to live as though there is no reward for what we do. To do the right thing, on an elevated level, each to their own capacity, each to their own responsibility, each to their own majestic presence in this life, small or low, overwhelming or hidden; that is love.

Improved, excellent education and magnified cultural sensitivity are not enough to end violence. A start in the right direction, a necessary beginning, but there is something more ontological that must be collectively restored to our inner-selves that is not too dependent on a matter as intangible as grace in order to master what a society, what a peoplehood can become post-violence. I do fear the most difficult pattern to subsume would be an era in which we slowly come to reject violence. That is not the era we live in today. Many conceive of selective persons for whom this is a reality, but, no, we are not even at the beginning of that stage. It is not that I say there is violence therefore no one rejects violence. I am not so stonehearted.

However, violence is so intertwined into every aspect of cultural affairs, within and without social orders as dynamic as those across the Earth, that to say there is any real status given to non-violence would be a disservice to the very idea of anti-violence not to mention the goal of a post-violence society. It is also not that we are to be reborn as one, but that our shapes and stations across this axis or that must be neurologically infused with the core elements in interdependent freedoms. No, we are so sadly removed from such a state that it has been difficult to continue this project and still claim that it is non-fiction, that it could possibly offer hope of a new tomorrow. But it is just that which must come. A new tomorrow is necessary for growth and what is more, for stability. Without stability the astronomical potentiality of the different surfaces of how to address justice just may leave us behind,

far from the very lived justice we seek to find. Having said that, the topic and substance of addressing justice must come first and be an early presence in our talks, or educational institutions for all ages, and our refined ingenuity for caring.

We must still believe that we can care and that we are able to care for each other to such extremes that as a matter more than cultural mores or amended laws, but constraints within reality – that we can leave violence behind us and move on to other things. Such wonderful things. We are living now in an age that was the distant past for Vulcans of *Star Trek*. We are barbarians. We are illogical. We have no control over our emotions. It has been said that though there is one idea of democracy for one country, another country may establish democracy within unique and different distinctions, and this is true. So true is how we will differ from the early era stereotypes of Vulcans; as soulless automatons lacking passion and depth. Still, similarly, we must find our method of embracing Surak. For us Surak will not and should not be a single individual or idea that spreads and uproots the old dominion. Our problem of violence is multilayered and we should have a multilayered response.

Our approach to resolving conflict is still an early study. Non-violence and conflict resolution are still nascent as a widespread concept, at least as we know them today. They are one layer. Racial justice is another layer. Poverty is another layer. Interpersonal turmoil is another and trauma yet still another. They are all violence.

To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, violence in society exist to protect the law. The law exists to protect those in power. It falls within any society's rights *and* responsibilities to protect themselves from a government of institutionalized violence. A change in power structures is not as far-fetched as many would have us to believe, limited by their own imaginations, and distilled by the indoctrination of capitalist credo that government exists to protect the people. It has not. Within my initial direction of the idea of rights and responsibilities, I think, goes one step further. I do not believe most societies would fall in plunder and anarchy if given the chance to rule themselves, to have rights themselves, because inside most individuals there lies a different credo, one of assumed rights *and* responsibilities towards oneself.

As so many self-help specialists have helped a generation to see, when we take care of ourselves, we are in a much better position to take care of others. We all do better when we all do better, as so many have said. Without currency, for example, people would not stop working, but they would work in a field more aligned with their sense of self – self-realization brings wisdom, wisdom brings charismatic openness to lift those around us. As stated in the science fiction series, *The Orville*, after matter synthesis when money became obsolete, people didn't lose that drive to become something great, it just took on another form. *The Orville* gives us "reputation" as one replacement for money as people still want to be the "best at what they do." While I agree with this as a mainstream sentiment, I think it is just that, a sentiment.

Perhaps without currency – within the inner stemming eclipse of rights *and* responsibilities – we would simply learn to take care of one another. I put forward to you, that if we each, all of us, had everything we needed or wanted provided for us, would not the majority of those in most societies want to give back for that which they receive. This is where social services come into play. Everything from healthcare to recreation, all according to an even balance. Yes, there is a Marxist element here: each

according to their own ability. Is that so bad? This balance would be so much easier to manage as society would have already found a balance in providing for those without asking for anything in return for providing to everyone else.

They would give in return for what they had received. Call it pride, as I know some of you will, or self-dignity, it is our internal sense of rights *and* responsibilities that will drive us to create a productive society that does not leave anyone behind – I do not mean that as a helpless, exploitative political motto. It would be real. It would be true.

I have said for some time now that social progress begins with education. Perhaps it begins with other externally acting reforms that persuade an atmosphere and environment that allow unaltered education to exist. From there education can continue to sustain such a society for generations. Perhaps these externally acting reforms will come from the political arena, or, perhaps, from an ontological-spiritual dominating tradition of the sternest, realized sense, that before we can become, we must become the other.

To return to Benjamin, what we can take from the notion that violence exists to protect the law is that violence in society is a choice. Not altogether a choice made willingly by us as individuals, but certainly one we collude in with our ingrained capitalists dream-like denial of our own mortality, as Ernest Becker put it, in our pursuit for wealth and prosperity. What Becker shows us is, again, is that it doesn't have to be this way. Think back on what was previously stated that in with worldbuilding of *The Orville*, reputation replaces currency. This is opposite of the critique of humanity that Becker illustrated in his writings. Striving for, taking pride in, targeting ambition for productive means, aiming for something higher, these can all be positive attributes if given a more humanistic aligned environment in which the groundwork has been settled on the soil of rights *and* responsibilities.

We do not give up our innate nature. We do not give up on curiosity, our wonder, or need to explore ourselves is paramount to what we know of life and living and being social creatures. The tenet of the reality of our own esteemed rights *and* responsibilities takes us to a place where we can see that we can be held to account for the condition of the world and our place in it. We are all graduates of our own experiences. With that in mind, keep alive the notion that we can be trusted to live out or days seeking a more fulfilling role for ourselves than the current options made available to us by the capitalist state-structured ethos of bootstrap technologies, of corporate office parties and wage labor.

Science Fiction and Charles W. Mills's Critique of "Ideal Theory"

Lieutenant Alara Kitan and Ideal Leadership

Charles W. Mills begins the wide-ranging discussion in his 2005 essay, "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology" by clarifying that feminist thinkers have expanded the larger discussion of ethics in rapid and unifying ways (165). I have completed a list, however incomplete, of feminist readings that might be useful to some of you who, like me, are always looking for something new to read. In *The Orville* episode, "Command Performance" (2017), I believe more than one ethical framework has been constructed, from feminist concerns to diversity and inclusion and reverse ageism.

I would dare say that there is more than Lieutenant Alara Kitan's lack of experience that makes her reluctant to take command when Capt. Mercer and Cmdr. Grayson leave the ship and fall victim to the transportation buoy in holographic disguise. There is clearly an internalized sexism at play when we see that the first thing she does is run to the masculine, (mostly) "all" male Moclan species second officer, Bortus, who is unable to take command due to his parenting responsibilities. He is sitting on an egg; symbolic of the birth of the commanding officer that is becoming manifest in Lt. Kitan in this episode. That internalized sexism is more than one-sided, more than internalized. The crew notices, too. Lt. LaMarr makes a quip, "We have Dora the Explorer running things here" (to paraphrase), but Alara does quickly demand obedience on the bridge and even dismisses Lt. Malloy from duty.

However, her attempt to imitate command is clear when she ignores Issac's advice and causes great damage to the ship. As Dr. Finn points out to her, she only needed to feel the need to "appear in command." She has yet to step out of that internalized sexism that is preventing her from showing her true, confident self. However, there is more happening here. Clearly, at her young age, just 23, there is a great deal of reverse ageism that the crew places on her. This "youngism" is evident not only just after the Captain and First Officer go missing, but especially when she follows orders from the Admiral to return to Earth where the Captain and First Officer will be declared lost in the line of duty. Would the crew be so spiteful, so hateful, so resentful of the officer in command if it were not a 23-year-old woman? I believe there certainly would still be mixed feelings, but they would not have been so judgmental and would have obeyed and understood the chain of command.

The fact that the Captain and First Officer are being held in a zoo offers us great insight into how the crew has idealized what the commanding officer in this case should, in their minds, be like. It is nothing less than a pre-written ideology; what is inscribed in their minds is *ideal*.

> Ideal theory, I would contend, is really an ideology, a distortional complex of ideas, values, norms, and beliefs that reflects the nonrepresentative interests and experiences of a small minority of the national population – middle-to-upper-class white males [..] Once this is understood, it becomes transparent why such a patently deficient, clearly counterfactual and counterproductive approach to issues on right and wrong, justice and injustice, has been so dominant. (Mills, 2005, 172)

There is also a sense of continuous foreshadowing throughout the series on *ideal* representation such as in “Majority Rule” when the away team has to take money with them down to the surface as they interact and move about society on the planet. Alara refers to the idea of money as “weird” and when Kelly must pay for their counterfeit badges, it does not occur to her to take out the money she was given. The *ideal* is at play here as well. Though it is not just in-story, the *ideal* ideology plays out in the casting of *The Orville* as well. It cannot be missed that we have yet another science fiction series with a white male captain. While there is greater representation in general than many science fiction series, I would argue that could be improved even further.

What is most evident in “Majority Rule” is the socialized lack of autonomy, all the while claiming to have mastered individualism, believing in a false sense of autonomy. What this unstructured capitalist democracy needs is holistic degrowth.

> The feminist degrowth debate and related discourses (Abazeri, 2022; Jax et al., 2018; Rendueles, 2017) argue for a conception of selfhood founded on the existential condition of being fundamentally dependent on others and on nature, exposing growth societies’ androcentric ideal of individual autonomy as a hollow fiction. This is not about abandoning the ideal of autonomy, but about redefining it as a capacity for collective self determination that is always already social, because it is based on mutual concern and access to limited, shared resources (Asara et al., 2013; Kallis et al., 2020; Schmelzer et al., 2022). (Eversberg and Schmelzer, *Degrowth Journal*, 2022, 7-8)

The zoo in “Command Performance” can be seen as representative of Ideal Theory – that everything has its proper place, held on a shelf, dominated by one class over another – and in the process we see this is the very locale where Alara blossoms into a commanding officer and rescues her captain and first officer. Where do we see this in our own society? It could be argued we see this as having grown from the Wages for Housework (WfH) campaigns that began in the early 1970s. As Emma Pizarro discusses in London School of Economic and Political Science blog,

> Whilst there may have been some confusion or disagreement outside of the group as to what the actual aims of the WfH campaign were, they have campaigned on family allowance and pay equity, lobbied the UN to measure and value unwaged work, contributed to the Green New Deal for Europe and regularly organised conferences which centered the experience of black and immigrant women. The movement continues today as the Global Women’s Strike, Women of Colour in the Global Women’s Strike, and Queer Strike. (2024, 8-9)

Charles W. Mills states, “In its ignorance of oppression, ideal theory also ignores the consequences of oppression” (2005, 175). Lieutenant Alara Kitan navigated a plan of action through enemy territory to save her commanding officers from oppression. She used imagination and demonstrated her innate leadership skills doing it. While at the zoo, she was quick on her feet to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances when their plan did not go according to an even structure. She was given the room to command, and with a little sage advice from an older, experienced woman, Dr. Claire Finn, Alara proved her value to the crew and in the process demonstrated the crew’s value to each other. She went against the commands of Admiral Tucker, went against the low pre-judged and sarcastic remarks of Lt. LaMarr, she went again the reverse ageism of Chief Engineer Steve Newton, who called her “kid”

more than once, and she resisted the *Ideal*-framed dominance of the unfolding situation, which is exactly what a capable leader does.

“I know what is written”: Babylon 5’s “Believers”

Just as Lieutenant Alara Kitan was successful in resisting the surrounding dominance of the realities of imposed Ideal Theory, there are occasions in which that resistance can be met with a loss. In the season one *Babylon 5* episode, “Believers” (1994), Dr. Stephen Franklin is confronted with contentious dilemma. An Onteen child, Shon, is suffering from a life-threatening congestive blockage. Dr. Franklin informs his parents that it is easily treatable with surgery, but their religion forbids cutting into the skin for fear that to do so would cause the spirit or soul to leave the body, leaving only a shell. In time Dr. Franklin request that Cmdr. Sinclair give him the legal authority to intervene and go against Shon’s parents’s wishes to perform the surgery.

Eventually, Cmdr. Sinclair denies Dr. Franklin’s request. Babylon 5 cannot be a station that respects the beliefs of each culture and species if they dismiss those beliefs and religious practices when they are in disagreement with human values and beliefs. Sinclair believes doing so would undermine the authority of Babylon 5, and he was correct in that judgement. However, Dr. Franklin ignores the command and performs the surgery against the parents’s wishes. The parents, Tharg and M’Ola, react in shock when they see that Shon has recovered. It is as though they are seeing a living demon. The parents return to take Shon with a travel robe. Dr. Franklin realizes too late the travel robe is intended for death ceremonies and that the parents are going to kill Shon now that his body has been cut open during the surgery. When Franklin arrives in their quarters Shon is dead, surrounded by candles, and Shon’s mother tells him not to worry, “This was not our son. This was only a shell.”

Let us take a sharp turn and consider what Charles W. Mills wrote in his essay, “‘Ideal Theory’ as Ideology”:

> [C]onsider conceptual innovation at the more local level: the challenge to the traditional way the public / private distinction was drawn, the concept of sexual harassment. In the first case, a seemingly neutral and innocuous conceptual divide turned out, once it was viewed from the perspective of gender subordination, as contributing to the reproduction of the gender system by its relegation of “women’s issues” to a seemingly apolitical and naturalized space. In the case of sexual harassment, a familiar reality – a staple of cartoons in men’s magazines for years (bosses chasing secretaries around the desk and so on) – was reconceptualized as negative (not something funny, but something morally wrong) and a contributor to making the workplace hostile for women. These realizations, these recognitions, did not spontaneously crystallize out of nowhere; they required conceptual labor, a different map of social reality, a valorization of the distinctive experience of women. As a result of having these concepts as visual aids, we can now see better: our perceptions are no longer blinded to realities to which we were previously obtuse. In some sense, an ideal observer should have been able to see them-yet they did not[.] (176)

For the Onteen parents, this concept that a spirit will escape the body if there is a cut from surgery, “like farm animals,” the mother says, to paraphrase, is another example of the so-called *Ideal* realized

and being practiced as a matter of fact. The episode attempts to show that when Dr. Franklin imposes his own belief system and performs the surgery, that, too, is suspect and another manifestation of pre-configured idealism, which is punished in a form of Shakespearean morality tale, and Shon still dies, this time through an even greater tragedy of being murdered by his own parents. However, I argue that punishment for Franklin's single-mindedness and desire to save the child only reinforces the blanket reality of the harm that the *Ideal* brings on the innocent.

As Mills states, "an ideal observer should have been able to see [the harm being done by their perceptual belief system] – yet they did not" (176). This demonstrates the force of strength of the *Ideal* and how embedded it is in our culture, in all of the world's many cultures. At the risk of stating what has been repeated many times, Ursula K. Le Guin famously stated, "We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art, and very often in our art, the art of words." Just as in Mills's example of the previously accepted behavior of "bosses chasing secretaries around the desk and so on," so too can any Ideal structure be broken down and bring what I have argued before needs to be a change in the discussion. Even the very idea of idealism needs to be altered. What it means to be spiritual needs to change and we should teach that achieving an elevated state is not required to gain wisdom.

We are still working to leave patriarchy behind and have even fallen farther back in that struggle for equality. We are even further away from deconditioning the public that capitalism is okay. The fetishism of capitalism is far too enveloped in the U.S. to begin to get a grasp and push up and out the manhole cover to lift ourselves out of the sewers. What can we work on? As Ursula K. Le Guin states: words. Rephrasing, restating, reigniting the old-world ideas with new ways of seeing them. There will be Onteen parents along the way; authority figures who believe they know what is written, but if futurism itself holds no direction in which to guide us responsibly, then that language is invalid. As Charles W. Mills shows us, what is perceived as Ideal is not diverse or inclusive; it lacks spontaneity. That is why so much of the majority of the political left, that claims to hold such values, are in reality, center left. These various visions of reality, just as with Mills example of sexual harassment as a norm, need to be forced into the community discussion: "These realizations, these recognitions, did not spontaneously crystallize out of nowhere; they required conceptual labor, a different map of social reality, a valorization of the distinctive experience of women" (176). I had mentioned the Wages for Housework campaign in the first installment of this series. This should allow that inclusion to bring greater clarity. Corinna Dengler writes in her essay, "Rereading the Wages for Housework Campaign: Feminist Degrowth Reflections on Social Reproduction, Commons, and a Care Income," that,

> First, the so-called dual systems theory built upon Heidi Hartmann's (1979) paper *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*. It discussed prospects for a feminist-Marxist tradition that regards capitalism and patriarchy as two independent but interrelated spheres with the goal of overcoming the notion of patriarchy being a mere side contradiction of capitalism (Sargent 1981). The second important debate concerned domestic labor and included the international political WfH campaign, which refused the predominant liberal feminist idea of female emancipation by means of entering the unchallenged, male-dominated sphere of wage labor. At first glance, WfH seemed to be a reformist demand for money for all the unpaid work carried out mostly by women.

> Arguably, this misinterpretation was partly responsible for the practical abandonment of the strategy by the end of the 1970s. However, as Louise Toupin (2018, 46) notes in her comprehensive anthology *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist Movement, 1972–77*, when "reduced to a monetary demand, the entire political analysis with which it was associated, as well as its subversive capacity, is too easily bypassed." (2-3)

And unfortunately, the slow progress, that is still ongoing, of women's liberation required a great deal of personal loss. The painful divorces, the angst of misguided men, the personal cost of spousal abuse for attempts to set grounds for equality, these are all the Onteen parents were willing to kill their child just for having a life-saving surgery. The *Ideal* is the resistance to the resistance of norms in favor of social evolution. The *Ideal* is so certain they "know what is written" that they are willing to punish progress. They will even resist progress that leads to better health and safety as we saw during the worst parts of the global Covid pandemic. They are not out of aggressive fomenting and incitation just yet. And we are still very early in our attempts to formulate the right words to counter their perceived norms.

> By the end of the 1970s, however, WfH had lost traction in international women's movements. While some strands of feminisms (most notably radical, Black, Marxist, and ecological feminisms) have built upon and expanded the importance of social reproduction, "the domain of social reproduction was not the strategic choice of the women's movement" (Toupin 2018, 3). Rather, the focus by the end of the 1970s was on the integration of women into the largely unquestioned sphere of wage work. This strategy of "stirring women in" was an attempt to universalize the androcentric model of the 40-hour week in Western Europe and the US. Nancy Fraser showed in her landmark publication *Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History* that this "has unwittingly provided a key ingredient of the new spirit of neoliberalism" (Fraser 2013, 220), with the feminist fight for the right to sell one's labor being a major instrument to fuel global economic growth. (Dengler, 2023, 5)

The Onteen parents have the final say. The global feminist movement was disabused to encourage and strengthen exploitation capitalism. It was organized into an agreeable center left promotion of capitalist fetishism. Dr. Franklin's attempts to take a stand worked against him. And against Shon. The feminist movement reinforced standards and divisions of labor exploitation. However, we can take comfort in knowing that if David Gerrod could find the words to illustrate the Onteen dilemma when he wrote "Believers" then we can find the right words and the right time, be in the right place at the right time, through a faith in the treble of spontaneity, to counter norms of industrialization, bad faith practices, and exploitation.

Discovery's "Point of Light," Klingon culture and "Ideal Theory," New Visions for "Reproduction," and "Commoning" as Future Utopia

In *Star Trek: Discovery's* "Point of Light" (2019), L'Rell is confronted with a Klingon house that wishes to return to the old ways of Klingons warring with Klingons, or, to Kol-Sha direct plan, to take

over the empire and lead himself; displacing the female warrior who rules over Qo'noS. There is currently peace between the Klingon houses, but some would prefer to continue to seek war and domination over each other, and, to continue the war with the Federation. L'Rell offers stability for Qo'noS and a tentative peace with the Federation. The tradition of warring houses is perceived as the Ideal, which L'Rell offers a different hope for growth within united Klingon empire.

The threat is so great that Philippa Georgiou, working for Section 31, must interfere and disrupt a takeover of the empire. After defeating Kol-Sha, Georgiou entreats L'Rell to rid herself of her child and Ash Tyler who is the Torchbearer anointed by Voq. They stage a plan to proclaim that Kol-Sha died defending L'Rell and that Ash Tyler was killed after betraying her. L'Rell makes an announcement that with her child having been killed, she will no longer have children, but will be Mother to all Klingons, "a fiercer title," to paraphrase. Ash and their child escape with Section 31 where Ash is recruited, and the child is sent to be raised on Boreth with Klingon monks.

The fact that "Mother" is now proclaimed as the title for the leader of the Klingon empire would certainly come with a challenge. The Ideal society for many Klingons is bloodshed and battle. We could argue that L'Rell's rule is rather to the far left of established Klingon mores. Klingon's savor autonomy. Their strive for personal independence. Not co-dependence. They idealize what values they conceive of as passionately strong. Consider this an obstacle of peaceful existence. We can navigate this discussion back to "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology".

> Or consider a (today) far more respectable ideal, that of autonomy. This notion has been central to ethical theory for hundreds of years, and is, of course, famously most developed in Kant's writings. But recent work in feminist theory has raised questions as to whether it is an attractive ideal at all, or just a reflection of male privilege. Human beings are dependent upon others for a long time before they can become adult, and if they live to old age, are likely to be dependent upon others for many of their latter years. But traditionally, this work has been done by women, and so it has been invisible or taken for granted, not theorized. Some feminist ethicists have argued for the simple abandonment of autonomy as an attractive value, but others have suggested that it can be redeemed once it is reconceptualized to take account of this necessarily inter-relational aspect (MacKenzie and Stoljar,2000). So the point is that idealization here obfuscates the reality of caregiving that makes any achievement of autonomy possible in the first place, and only through nonideal theory are we sensitized to the need to balance this value against other values, and rethink it. Somewhat similarly, think of the traditional left critique of a liberal concept of freedom that focuses simply on the absence of juridical barriers, and ignores the many ways in which economic constraints can make working-class liberties largely nominal rather than substantive. (Mills 2005, 177)

The feminine leading over the masculine. The feminine as strength. Yes, Klingon women fight alongside the men for the honor and glory of battle, but there is no denying that to be ruled as a matriarchy would be difficult to accept for many traditionalist Klingons. Much in the same way, even today, this masculinarity condemns modern human societies with an anthropologicalesque condemnation of our mutual best interests. As Charles W. Mills wrote, "In its ignoring of oppression, ideal theory also ignores the consequences of oppression" (175). There is no seizing of the galley of predisposed wisdom from which we retreat. No, we simply tire ourselves out with the fetishism of

commercialization and the fabrication of the Ideal of a global local-bound stellar conquest. What we think will make life better always leads to a greater insult on the integrity of being human.

Male-dominated accumulation of growth is perceived as the Ideal. Production equals success. Conquest and autonomy equal progress. That is what the world is taught to believe. However, degrowth scholars and feminist scholars offer a different hope, which has been previous mentioned in this three-part series.

> They make it possible in the first place to posit these basic (re)productivities as unquestioned 'givens' requiring no further consideration by those pursuing the ever further expansion of so-called 'productive' economic activity. It is precisely the separations between 'production' and 'reproduction', 'public' and 'private' and 'male' 'gainful' work and 'female' care work, which a feminist degrowth critique exposes as basic preconditions for the implementation of an abstract logic of increase. This implies that it is not simply the basic calculative logic of the capitalist economy, but also a specific, historically bourgeois conception of (male) subjectivity and gender relations as well as relationships with nature that needs to be fundamentally changed (Barca, 2020; Kothari et al., 2019; Schmelzer et al., 2022) (Eversberg and Schmelzer, *Degrowth Journal*, 2022, 5).

A change in worldview that mutual dependency is a reality and not a weakness needs to be sought and preached from the top down, but the reality is that it can only and will only be achieve from the bottom up. Only communities drive deliverance. One at a time. This can be seen in a great number of social initiates. Ideal Theory stipulates that all and everyone is starting with the same grab-bag of privilege and emotional conceit.

> By contrast, nonideal theory recognizes that people will typically be cognitively affected by their social location, so that on both the macro and the more local level, the descriptive concepts arrived at maybe misleading (Mills 2004, 175).

Universal understanding of economic equality is mired in historically masculine terms that degrowth and feminist scholars have argued leaves an opportunity for a smarter division of beneficial means and results.

> In *The case for degrowth* (2020), degrowth scholars Giorgos Kallis, Susan Paulson, Giacomo D'Alisa, and Federico Demaria propose to combine the "universal" aspect of UBI with the "care" of a care income by promoting a universal care income. This conceptualization builds "on other expressions of UBI but differs by foregrounding the social recognition of unpaid and highly gendered care work that we all perform to sustain the life and wellbeing of households and communities" (Kallis et al. 2020, 71). Whether this "foregrounding" refers primarily to a change in name (from UBI to universal care income) that translates to a discursive visibilization/politicization of social reproduction, or whether a differentiated universal care income refers to a UBI for everybody that increases for people who perform care work, is contested. (Dengler 2023, 8)

However, the Ideal is strongly rooted. We can return to Klingon social mores as an example. Between the years 2257 and 2372 the masculine concept of honor had not retreated from their culture. In the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* episode, "Sons of Mogh" (1996), Kurn ask his brother Worf to kill him through a ritual referred to as *Mauk-to'Vor* to restore his honor. Having lost prestige and material

possessions, Kurn believed there was no path to living that resembled an honorable life. Over a century had passed since the rule of L'Rell and Kurn still insists on putting honor before his own life. Interestingly, it is Jadzia Dax, a Trill, who stops the ritual, having recognized what was going on due to her familiarity with Klingon culture. Even she does not escape the lure of the Klingon way of life and in the episode, "Blood Oath" (1994), she leaves her post to join three Klingons from the life of her symbiont's previous host to fulfill a promise she is not technically bound to and kill a man who had murdered the three Klingon's first sons. If even the intellectually strident Jadzia Dax could not refuse an honorable battle, joined with Klingons, what hope is there for a new perspective that brings parity and peace.

What humans create they are. What writers write reflects not only their surrounding environment, but also their hopes, wishes, and desires. One can be a critique of a way of life, while still working oneself into the benefits of that lifestyle. Both can be true at the same time. What we would stand the reap the greatest benefits from is "commoning":

> Commons, such as collective food provisioning in popular kitchens or open-source software, are created by commoners, who collectively produce, govern, provision, and use commons in accordance with the needs of the group (i.e., commoners collectively create the commons in the process of commoning) (Euler 2018). The inherently relational process of communing strengthens the social fabric and puts human needs, as well as the "sustainability of life" (Pérez Orozco 2014), at its center. (Dengler 2023, 9).

In Corinna Dengler's *Hypatia* article, "Rereading the Wages for Housework Campaign: Feminist Degrowth Reflections on Social Reproduction, Commons, and a Care Income," Dengler magnifies the concept of commoning as a social repair tool in which we could locate an inter-dependence better suited to the reality of living. L'Rell and Ash found that commoning ground in their relationship as they saw over the functions of a new Klingon rule. It also shows in their dependence on each other. What we do not see within the Klingon empire is a code for reciprocity. Social, emotional, intellectual, cognitive, material, caregiving, each hold a rule for harmonizing reciprocity that can lead to a better way of life. One that avoid the pitfalls of the ideology of the Ideal and ushers in a communicable weaving and growing of communal life without endless growth or profits over people.